



Limitless News

Table of Contents

Highlights

Blind Beginnings Flash Mob

Youth Leadership Weekend: My Experience

Family Adventure Camp

Camp Hornby

Getting Together with Technology

Family Community Discovery

Junior Explorers Club

Talent Show

Purdy's Christmas Fundraiser

Parent Workshops

Interest Stories

Changes to the Board and Staff

Netflix for Kids

Canadian Blind Hockey Western Regional Tournament and Try Blind Hockey Opportunity

Contributors

Highlights

Blind Beginnings Flash Mob

On October 5th 2015, Blind Beginnings organized a flash mob at Metropolis in Metrotown. Many members of Blind Beginnings danced in this flash mob including youth and several adults. The purpose of the flash mob was to push the boundaries of what people think blind people can do, and, of course, to have fun!

Harjinder Saran, who participated in the flash mob, said “I decided to do the flash mob because I wanted to end the stigma that blind people couldn't dance... and because I was looking to take part in a physical activity.” Creating a flash mob takes a lot of preparation and this performance took a year to create and rehearse. Harjinder went on to say, “I had an overall positive experience... and [all the practice] was worth it for the great result!”

You can watch a video of the flash mob with audio description at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCPkSIIF2wg&feature=youtu.be>

Youth Leadership Weekend: My Experience

In the beginning of April 2016, I went to the Blind Beginnings Youth Leadership Weekend and it was one of the best experiences of my life. I have to be honest, I was originally a little bit nervous about going. I'd never spent a night away from my family and I'm homeschooled, so I'm not really used to being around large groups of people. But I decided to step outside of my comfort zone, and I was surprised by how much I enjoyed it. I was even more surprised by how much I learned and how much it changed my perspective on myself.

During the Youth Leadership Weekend, I tried many things that I've never done before and I had many fun and interesting experiences including going bowling, eating at different restaurants, staying in a hotel, and using public transportation. I also enjoyed the different workshops that we had each day on topics such as public speaking and volunteering. I think that the experience of the weekend has made me more independent. I did many things myself during the weekend that my parents have always done for me in the past.

I also really enjoyed meeting new people during the weekend. Meeting new people is always nice, of course, but it was even better to meet other visually impaired and blind people my age. Before the weekend, I had not met very many people with visual impairments. I had a pen pal

for several years who had the same condition as me, but she lived in Switzerland and I only met her in person twice. So it was great to talk to other blind and visually impaired people in person.

For me, the best thing about the Youth Leadership Weekend was the way that it changed my perspective on myself and on my disability. During the weekend, I tried many new things and it was a little scary at first, but I quickly found that I gained confidence. I am being completely honest when I say that the weekend totally changed my perspective on my disability. I've always unconsciously considered my options in life to be severely limited by my visual impairment, but now I'm beginning to believe that I can do pretty much anything I want to if I set my mind to it.

Family Adventure Camp

Blind Beginnings was pleased to host our sixth annual summer Family Adventure camp this year from August 25th to the 28th. Every summer, Blind Beginnings invites families with visually impaired children to join us in a beautiful spot for a varied and fun set of activities. Past activities have included caving, rock climbing, beach exploration, ropes courses, and much more.

This summer, we were pleased to invite families to join us at Camp Olave on the beautiful sunshine Coast for another fun filled three days. Campers had the chance to go hiking through an enchanted forest decorated with various crafts and creations, many of which were tactile and could be explored by touch. Other activities of note were archery, kayaking, visiting the local farmers market, and a scavenger hunt on the first day to give campers and their siblings time to orient themselves in the campsite. The campers and their families were joined by two youth leaders and two youth mentors, as well as vision teachers, orientation and mobility instructors, and various other volunteers.

In addition to the camp activities, campers had the opportunity to help cook two of our dinners; shepherd's Pie and tacos, as well as our French toast breakfast on the last morning. They also had a chance to experience what it was like to record a song. One of our volunteers brought along some equipment to give a taste of what it was like to work in a recording studio. This was a new experience, even for some of our youth leaders, and everyone had a great time! Blind Beginnings is already looking forward to what 2017 has in store, and we would love for you to join us. Stay tuned!

Camp Hornby

This summer, my family and I attended Camp Hornby for the first time, and we had a lot of fun! After hearing many people who spoke very highly of it, we were very excited, and were definitely not disappointed. Camp Hornby is an outdoor adventure camp, held every summer at The Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Center on Hornby Island, and has been running for the past 14 years. It is set in a beautiful national park with sandy beaches and lush woodsy areas that offer much space for fun adventures, creativity, and learning experiences. They have well-trained staff leading activities ranging from kayaking and paddle-boarding, to wall climbing and high ropes; there is something for all ages. There are even some activities geared towards adults, so that everyone in the family has something to do.

Family members are welcome to attend and enjoy the camp with their child, or youth can go on their own, which can be a great opportunity to practice independence. I really enjoyed my time at Camp Hornby. It was fun to challenge myself with things like the Giant's Ladder, which is a climbing structure, requiring teamwork in order to reach the top, and paddle-boarding, which is kind of like surfing's more relaxed cousin.

I also loved meeting new friends, reuniting with old friends, and the social aspects of summer camp. Most of all, I loved the feeling of connection that I had with others while I was there. Everyone there was either visually impaired, or were related to or at least knew someone who was. Camp is a great way to meet people who are experiencing similar circumstances to yours. For all of these reasons, I recommend Camp Hornby to any interested youth, whether you come alone, or with your families. It is a great way to make new friends, try new things, and challenge your limits.

Spotlight

Getting Together with Technology

Getting Together with Technology (GTT) is a program put on by the Blind Beginnings organization in association with the Canadian council of the blind. GTT helps teach those with a visual impairment about different aspects of technology. The meetings are two hours long. The first half of the meeting focuses on a specific topic chosen by the group, and in the second half of the meeting, participants are separated into smaller groups. In these groups they have the opportunity to bring their own technology, find a member who is familiar with that technology, and get all their questions answered or their problems solved.

Some topics that were previously covered in meetings were: Intro to the iPhone and voiceover, Audiobooks and podcasts, managing iCloud, Windows 10: should you upgrade?, NVDA and JAWS, and social media (specifically Facebook). A suggestion for a future topic is scanning text

and OCR.

Blind Beginnings is excited to introduce a second monthly meeting starting in October. The monthly Wednesday meeting will continue as usual at the Blind Beginnings office in New Westminster, but now there will be a Saturday meeting as well at the Broadway campus of Vancouver Community College. Blind Beginnings is very grateful to the college's visually impaired program for allowing the meetings to be held in their classroom.

The month of October is dedicated to the topic of accessible GPS. The hope with starting another meeting on Saturday is that more participants will attend and take part in the meetings. GTT is a great way to interact, socialize, and learn more about the technology you use every day.

Family Community Discovery

Since 2008, Blind Beginnings families have been participating in our Community Discovery outings to places like farms, pumpkin patches, Skytrain headquarters, described live theatre, a Coast Guard station, and much more.

Our next Community Discovery outing is to the Ghost Train in Stanley Park on October 15! Join us as we celebrate the seasons of ghosts and goblins by taking a trip on the Stanley Park Ghost train. The Day of the Dead is approaching quickly! Let's gather with friends and family to remember our loved ones and celebrate this festival of life. Be serenaded by a mariachi band of cockroaches, ride the train through the tunnel of flames with the Aztec Lord and Lady of Death, and picnic with us in a gorgeous graveyard where friendly souls return to dance with a twelve foot skeleton.

VocalEye will be providing live description services. The pre-train ride activities beginning at 4 PM include a maze, creatures of the night, and the 3rd annual Spooky Barn. We will then climb aboard the Ghost Train at 5:30 to be scared silly!

Community Discovery outings are currently offered in Metro-Vancouver and Kamloops. If you want more information about our upcoming outings, or are interested in starting a program in your community, please Email shawn@blindbeginnings.ca.

Junior Explorers Club

The Blind Beginnings Junior Explorers Club is a great way to meet and get to know other blind and partially sighted children and their families and have some fun times you'll never forget.

From making Easter baskets to playing drama games, there are lots of things we do together. Junior Explorers Club is about fun, empowerment, and having new experiences in a supportive and inclusive setting.

At one club meeting we had a Master Chef Snack challenge. Children were split into teams and given a variety of edible ingredients and asked to make snacks for each other and for the judges. Through this activity, participants were able to express their creativity and practice some of the skills associated with food preparation.

Parents are often nervous about letting their blind children chop vegetables or use the oven which is why activities like this are so valuable. There are always Youth Leaders who are blind or partially sighted volunteering at club meetings. Their role is to assist when needed, answer questions from both the children and their parents, and act as role models.

This year, our Metro-Vancouver club has moved to a new time and location: the Bridgeview Community Centre in Surrey. The club is open to any child who is blind or partially sighted in the Metro-Vancouver region as well as their sighted siblings. This year's program also includes a Parent's Lounge where parents can relax, have some refreshments, connect with other parents, and access support, resources, and information from a BB staff member. The club meets on the last Saturday of the month from noon until 2:00 pm.

Bridgeview Community Centre is a short walk from the Scott Road Skytrain Station. It has a beautiful kitchen and full-sized gym which will enable us to do a wider range of activities. Contact the Blind Beginnings office for more details. New club participants are always welcome. For more details, please Email shawn@blindbeginnings.ca.

Talent Show

ATTENTION!!!! This is not a warning! This is not a drill!

Run! You heard me run as fast as you can! Because there's going to be an explosion... that's right, an explosion of talent happening within Blind Beginnings.

Where? Why at the Sapperton Pensioners Hall at 318 Keary St, New Westminster, BC of course!

When? We're glad you asked, because we've moved to a new season of the year! This year's show will be on November 26th, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

If you have a passion for something that you're just itching to show the world, this is the show for you! Forget the competition, that's a thing of the past! Blind Beginnings Has Talent is going in a new direction: a celebration of talent! We're looking for any and all kinds, sorts, types and

styles of talent. If you want to show us your dance moves, read a poem of your own, share your martial arts know-how, or anything else you can think of, we'd love you to share your skills with us! Perform alone or with friends, or you can even share a non-performance talent like paintings or drawings you have made. Whatever it is, we'd love to see what you've got!

Interested in participating? Send an email to talent@blindbeginnings.ca and tell us what you would like to contribute to this celebration! Performers must be members of Blind Beginnings. Auditions will be held during the fall with a date to be determined. If you can't make it to an audition, don't fret! We will accept a video submission for your audition.

We can't wait to see what you have in store for us! And remember to tell all your friends and family to come and enjoy the explosive spectacle that will be Blind Beginnings Has Talent... 2016 edition!

Purdy's Christmas Fundraiser

With Thanksgiving comes the reminder that Christmas is fast approaching. If you're like many of us, Purdy's Chocolates make a great gift for all those hard-to-buy-for people on your list. Who doesn't love chocolate?

From the comfort of your home you can browse the wide selection of chocolates and make your purchase for the same price you would in a store. Blind Beginnings will receive at least 25% of what you spend.

Please consider supporting Blind Beginnings by purchasing your Holiday chocolates online this year. For details visit www.blindbeginnings.ca.

Parent Workshops

Blind Beginnings, CNIB and CDBA are pleased to present a two-part series of parent workshops:

Many parents were raised with the "Do What I Say" model of parenting. Children were expected to obey parents without question. Well, for many, this model is not working quite as well as perhaps it did in the "old days". Power struggles between children/teens and parents are very common, and parental authority doesn't seem to carry the way it did. So is there a way to parent "peacefully"? Are power struggles avoidable?

Lynn Sumida is a dynamic speaker who has taught around the world on this topic. She will give you information and tools to encourage cooperation from your child or teen and introduce a

perspective that created peace for her, as a parent. Lynn brings over 35 years' experience to her presentations. She has been a school social worker and a private counsellor dealing with children, adults and families. Therapeutically she has dealt with issues of relationships, abuse, health, addictions, illness and loss. She is also a seasoned presenter offering workshops and training in North America and abroad. Lynn is the founder and President of Miruspoint Facilitators Inc. a Vancouver company that offers one-on-one and group programs for individuals and organizations wanting to support people in "in-locking" their creativity, sense of purpose and overall well-being.

The workshops will take place on Wednesday October 19th and Wednesday November 23rd from 7:00 – 9:00 PM. The address is 227 6th Street in New Westminster.

October 19th:

- Why we do what we do
- The Genetic Needs that drive behaviour
- How to “decode” your child’s needs

November 23rd:

- Understanding behaviour and its four components
- Which component is easiest to change?
- How to encourage responsibility in your child/teen

This is a great opportunity to network and share! Refreshments will be available.

Contact Shawn Marsolais at 604-434-7243 or shawn@blindbeginnings.ca

Interest Stories

Changes to the Board and Staff

Blind Beginnings was pleased to welcome Sean Heaslip to the team as our new part-time Program Coordinator this past April. Sean has a Masters in counselling and has grown up with a visual impairment. He is doing an excellent job assisting with our Junior Explorer’s, Youth Leadership, Parent, and family summer camp and community discovery programs. He is also taking on the role of Volunteer Coordinator. He can be reached through Email at:

seanh@blindbeginnings.ca.

After five years in the role, Marilyn Rushton stepped down as President this past June. Marilyn has led the organization through tremendous growth over the past five years. She has been a cheerleader and an advocate for our programs and has spread the word about our organization with enthusiasm and passion throughout the community. We are pleased that Marilyn has agreed to stay on the Board in the role of Past President.

We are also pleased to welcome Betty Nobel into her new role as President. Betty has many years of leadership and Board experience and we are confident she will be an excellent leader as the organization continues to grow and develop.

In addition to the change in leadership we are also thrilled to welcome two new individuals to our Board. Maria Zeldis is a parent of a 3-year old child who is blind. In addition to her personal connection to blindness, Maria is a lawyer with many legal connections and has extensive experience fundraising through the Delta Gamma Foundation. Another new Board member is Heather Topley who has a commerce degree specializing in marketing and International business and 10 years of experience in sales and marketing.

Another important position on our Board is the Youth Representative position. This individual is a youth leader whose responsibility is to bring forward the opinions and concerns of the youth. Our new Youth Representative is Harjinder Saran.

We are excited to have the combined knowledge and experience of these individuals joining our team.

Netflix for Kids

Netflix is a streaming service that allows users to view television shows and movies for all ages at a low monthly cost. Until recently the service has lacked an audio description feature for persons with visual impairments. This was brought to the company's attention. As of April 2015 Netflix began providing audio description for many of its shows and movies. Now there are over 140 shows featuring descriptive audio on Netflix. The company has made a commitment to audio describe all the new original series that are created from this point forward.

Netflix has over 30 animated programs that feature described audio, with over 20 that are appropriate for children ten and under. Netflix has added suggested age ranges for all animated programs. A list of these programs can be found on the Netflix Audio Described Programs page. Netflix also has a list of DVD's rated G or PG which are audio described.

Netflix and Disney have now signed an agreement whereby Disney movies will be offered on Netflix, once out of movie theatres. Since many of the Disney releases come with audio

description, this is wonderful news for visually impaired children. Additionally, four television networks also have audio description for children's programming on Saturday mornings, making it easier than ever for parents of visually impaired children to find age appropriate described shows that their kids will enjoy. With all these new and upcoming advances in audio description, visually impaired people have more access than ever to the services of Netflix.

Canadian Blind Hockey Western Regional Tournament and Try Blind Hockey Opportunity

Coming this November, the inaugural 2016 Western Regional Blind Hockey Tournament is the first ever tournament for the sport of Blind Hockey to take place on the west coast! The event runs the weekend of November 19 and 20 in Langley, BC. The tournament is hosted by BC Blind Sports and will heavily feature players from the hometown Vancouver Eclipse Blind Hockey Team that is made up from players from across the lower mainland. The remaining athletes will be primarily from Western Canada coming from the Calgary Seeing Ice Dogs, and Edmonton SeeHawks as well as independent players from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

All games are 100% free to come watch and will be fun for the whole family. There will be a Learn to Skate and Try Blind Hockey Session that is open to anyone who is blind or partially sighted of any age who wants to come take part in this fast-growing parasport. For more information, and to register for the learn to skate and try Blind Hockey session, please email info@blindicehockey.com.

SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 19th

12:15 pm – 1:45 pm – Game # 1

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm – Learn to Skate & Try Blind Hockey

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm – Game # 2

Sunday, November 20th

10:15 am – 11:45 am – Game # 3

Contributors

Zoe Clarinval

Jill Sloane

John Tee

Clement Chou

Connell Simkin-Watt

Keisha Anderson