

# Speaking For the Inherent Value of All Human Life

The movement to bring euthanasia or assisted suicide to Canada has been going on for decades. Having achieved success with the official legalization of physician-assisted suicide in June 2016, that movement is attempting to expand euthanasia through Parliament and a legal challenge in a British Columbia court case, Lamb v. Canada.

The Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada, a Christian advocacy organization, has been active in opposing the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide on the grounds that it goes against the laws of God. But in July 2018 the government of Canada passed Bill C-14, making euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide legal in Canada.

A challenge to the new law was launched to expand access to those beyond what's currently legal. The case, Lamb v. Canada, is being heard

"This year looks to be a very important one for the issue of euthanasia and protecting the vulnerable in this country."

in British Columbia. It hinges on the eligibility criteria of Bill C-14 that death is 'reasonably foreseeable'. The proponents, Julia Lamb and the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), argue that death is not reasonably foreseeable in some non-curable and progressive diseases and so the "new bill leaves many seriously ill Canadians, like Julia, behind" and therefore violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In January 2019, ARPA Canada applied for and was granted intervenor status to provide argument in the Lamb case against expanding access. They have invited Bethesda Christian Association, as well as Anchor Association (Ontario), to join them in bringing

before the judge a Christian perspective and concerns about the expansion of euthanasia and its impact on people and families with disabilities.

Bethesda will be working with ARPA Canada and Anchor Association to prepare the arguments.

The trial is scheduled for November 2019. As Andre Schutten, the lead counsel on the case explains, "This year looks to be a very important one for the issue of euthanasia and protecting the vulnerable in this country. We hope you join us in praying for God's protection for our most vulnerable neighbours in the midst of a careless culture that calls for more and more access to death on demand."

See the full article, *The Push for Expanding Euthanasia Through Canadian Courts Continues: the Lamb Case*, by Andre Schutten, HonBA., LLB, LLM, Director of Law and Policy at ARPA Canada, on the Bethesda website: [www.bethesdaabc.com](http://www.bethesdaabc.com)

## Brian Doerksen Fundraising Concert

What a night of worship, inspiration and stories! The Brian Doerksen Benefit Concert on November 3, 2018 raised over \$35,000 for Bethesda's ministry. These donation dollars are being used to bless many people with diverse abilities and their families.

So many people contributed to making this evening a success: to all our sponsors, volunteers, Brian and his team, and to all who came out, supported Bethesda, and enjoyed the evening, thank you!!



## Looking for more stories?

We share our stories and announcements regularly on our website story page and on social media



# We're kicking off our annual Lend-a-Hand Campaign!

*We're on a mission to ensure every life is valued and each person has a place. Join us in transforming our communities into places of equality, where no one is left behind.*

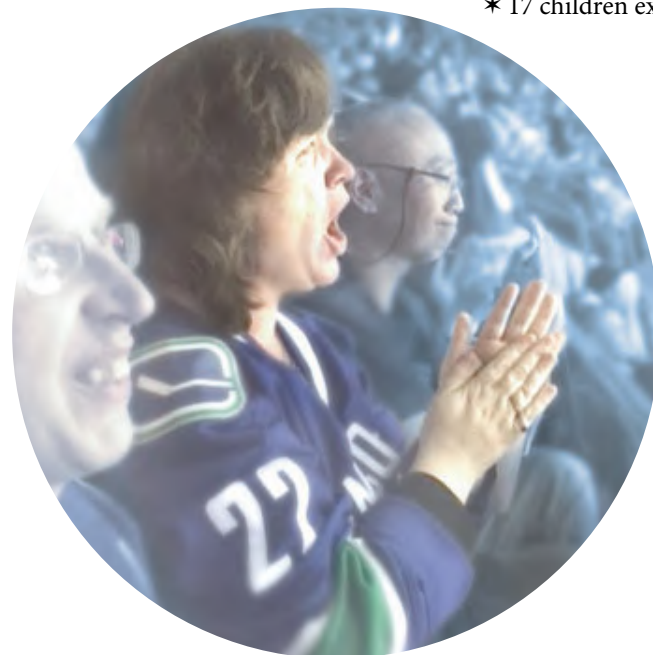


Last year Bethesda supporters gave over \$160,000 to the Lend-a-Hand Campaign to support people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

This generosity changed lives:

- \* 14 job seekers received guidance with their job search
- \* 16 adults went on 5 recreational, spiritual & cultural excursions, including a 4-day retreat on Bowen Island
- \* 18 adults enjoyed a week at Camp Bethesda
- \* 17 children experienced summer day camp

We were also able to offer informational services to families, churches and schools, crisis support, problem-solving, short and long-term planning, and much more.



By giving to our **Lend-A-Hand Campaign** you are expressing a love that can **transform the world.**

Give online at [www.BethesdaBC.com](http://www.BethesdaBC.com)

or mail your gift directly to:

Lend-a-Hand Campaign  
Bethesda Christian Association  
105-2975 Gladwin Rd, Abbotsford BC V2T 5T4

## BETHESDA CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

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## Financial Policy

Spending of funds is confined to Board approved services and purchases. Each gift designated toward an approved service will be used as designated with the understanding that when any given need has been met, designated gifts will be used where most needed. Gifts are acknowledged and receipted with a tax deductible receipt.



# Spring Newsletter 2019

- P1** / A glimpse of life inside our homes
- P2** / Message from our CEO
- P4** / Self-Advocates speak up
- P5** / Sanctity of life challenge Bill C-41
- P6** / Lend-a-Hand campaign

Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord had done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.  
*Psalms 126:2-3*



## Staffed Residential Homes Where People Grow on Their Own Terms

Bethesda started out with one group home. In 1971, we opened a home in the Mt. Lehman neighbourhood of Abbotsford to provide a loving, safe place for people as an alternative to the institutions of the day. For many years it was home to approximately 20 people. While the Mt. Lehman home was a big improvement, it was still too large to provide personalized services or develop a typical home-like experience.

Throughout the 90's we started opening homes that were smaller, with no more

than 4 or 5 living in each one. Today, typically 2 to 4 people live in a home. The transition from the large group home at Mt. Lehman to the smaller homes was a period of learning. A smaller home felt like a real home.

There was still staff present 24/7, but the people living in them had freedoms they'd never experienced before: the kitchen was available to them, food wasn't locked away. They could make themselves a snack or a meal. They were  
» cont. page 2

"Bethesda supports people with diverse abilities to thrive in reciprocal relationships, inclusive communities, and lifestyles rooted in true belonging."





## Message from our CEO

For behold, the winter is past;  
the rain is over and gone. The  
flowers appear on the earth, the  
time of singing has come...  
*Song of Solomon 2:11-12*

As we anticipate Spring and all that it symbolizes, we experience hope that Spring is the promise that everything can begin again. We can let go of the old and embrace something new. Promise, rebirth, renewal, starting over, fulfillment, provision and growth. The spring season lifts our hearts and fills us with anticipation of what's ahead.

I don't know about you, but I smile a big smile when I see buds pushing through the soil as they prepare to blossom. The hard work of growth is finally yielding beauty and reward. I can't help but see this as a metaphor of the people we support at Bethesda. Many have fought hard to grow and blossom in their communities. It is exciting to see people thrive, as they are empowered to be all that God has created them to be. To witness the courage and tenacity of people who have had to overcome stereotypes and systems that limit them, fills me with joy and hope for those who will 'stand on their shoulders' in the future.

As we celebrate the joy and hope of spring, let's forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead (Philippians 3:13): a world where we include people of all abilities. The promise rests with the people who are pushing up, breaking ground,

and unfolding their true selves as valued members of community. Let's celebrate and empower those in our lives to blossom and thrive as full citizens in our communities, just as God intended them to be.

*Jody*

"We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing and inclusion."

Max de Pree

### Call for Nominations

Bethesda's Board of Directors is elected by the Membership to govern the Association. The Board is now calling for Members who would like to serve as a Director for a 3-year period. Board members are able to serve no more than two consecutive 3-year terms.

The Board meets regularly with its CEO to review such information as necessary to ensure that the mission of Bethesda is being carried out throughout the agency. If you are interested, please email President George Boer at [Life@BethesdaBC.com](mailto:Life@BethesdaBC.com) and a Nomination Committee member will call you for further discussion.

### Student Bursaries Available

Bethesda Christian Foundation provides bursaries to post-secondary students engaged in full-time studies leading to work in supporting people with disabilities and their families. Students may apply for the 2019/2020 school year by requesting an application package from Bethesda Christian Association at [life@bethesdabc.com](mailto:life@bethesdabc.com) or 604-850-6604



## Residential Staffed Homes... a place to belong

» cont. from page 1

asked how they wanted to decorate their room and how they wanted their home to look. They could make choices about how they wanted to relax – in their room, watching tv or playing board games with their house-mates. They participated in maintaining their home by learning how to do household tasks.

Staff had some hesitation about how well people would manage in this new environment. But then a most unexpected thing happened.

People started to take an interest in the outcomes of their own lives. They learned they could make choices, that they had a say. They became curious to try things and learn. Ann Trudeau, a staff who worked through that period, recounts a truth she learned from that time, "the minute you empower people, they flourish".

Everyone is different, but people thrived with their new freedoms. Ann tells a story about Phil, who moved from Mt. Lehman home into West Abbotsford home. "Phil loves clothes. It's important to him that his clothes are clean and nice. He couldn't wait for laundry day,

We are no longer expanding our staffed residential home services. It's public policy, and we agree there needs to be more housing options for people. As Jody Siebert says "We hear from people with diverse abilities and their families that they want options to enable them to live with more independence than they would experience in a staffed residential home." That's our focus today, providing more housing options that enable people to live a full life within community.



**'Each home uniquely reflects the interests and personalities of the people who live there'**

he would get anxious and frustrated. Once he was in his new home at West Abbotsford, we realized there was no good reason he couldn't do his laundry everyday.

We thought, 'he gets upset if he can't wear his clothes when he wants to, well, why can't he wash his clothes when he needs? It is his home.' It became about staff meeting people on their terms."

**"The minute you empower people, they flourish".**

And so now Phil washes his clothes when he needs to, and he's a lot more content. It was that simple.

Staff are respectful in many other ways.

They are mindful to treat the home as someone's home, not just a workplace. The respect shows in ways like staff ringing a doorbell and waiting for the door to be opened to them or greeting the people that live there before checking in with their co-workers. These kinds of small acts reminds staff that *they* are the strangers entering someone else's home.

As an organization committed to a world of interdependent equality, Bethesda meets people where they are, enabling growth on their own terms. Whether this means supporting people with diverse abilities in staffed residential homes, finding meaningful work, or accessing inclusive community, inclusion is always the goal.

## Self-Advocates Talk To The Mayor

Meeting new people, being informed, having a voice, feeling confident — these are just a few of the ways Self-Advocates see themselves.

The Self-Advocates at Crossroads Community Inclusion in Chilliwack decided they needed to talk to their new Mayor, Ken Popove. They have ideas that would improve life, not just for them, but anybody: like making it easier to use the online bus schedules and keeping sidewalks clear when it snows.

There was a lot to do to get ready for the meeting. The 11 Self-Advocates learned about local government and the role of the mayor. Then a date was set for the Mayor to visit them at Vedder Terrace.

They brainstormed the topics they would raise in the meeting, the questions they would ask, such as, "what is the City doing to support homeless people or people with mental health concerns?", and "what can be done to improve Self-Advocates' involvement in the Chilliwack community?"

Chilliwack Mayor Ken Popove (back row, 4th from left) meets with Vedder Terrace Self-Advocates. This group of Self-Advocates is gaining practical experience in civic engagement and advocacy.



**Nothing About Us Without Us!**

As the meeting day approached they baked fresh cookies and decorated the building to give their VIP guest the warmest welcome.

In the meeting, the Self-Advocates talked to Mayor Ken about their concerns and he offered to explore solutions to some of the topics they raised. "I like that he is so approachable and willing to keep talking to us" says Yoshi, speaking of the Mayor.

They showed Mayor Ken around Vedder Terrace Intentional Community, and a few of them gave him a tour of their homes.

Mayor Ken was very impressed with all he saw and heard. He invited people at Vedder Terrace to visit him at City Hall, tour his office and maybe sit at his desk and even use his gavel!

## Summer Camp Student Jobs

We have summer job opportunities for energetic and responsible students to work with kids with diverse abilities at our summer day camp.

### You need to be:

- at least 19 years old
- enrolled full-time in a relevant field of study
- have a Class 5 Driver's License and be able to obtain a Class 4 driver's license by date of hire.

### You will be blessed with:

- hands-on experience in Special Education, Healthcare, Social Work, Church Ministry, and more
- making a positive impact on kids with intellectual disabilities
- growing and developing as a person and a Christian



Find out more about our summer day camp jobs at

[www.BethesdaBC.com/careers.html](http://www.BethesdaBC.com/careers.html)

Apply online by April 26, 2019