



**DISABILITY
RESOURCE
DIGEST**

Volume 8 Issue 6 June 2008

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The Disability Resource Digest (DRD) is a special project of SMD Alliance. SMD Alliance is based in Manitoba, Canada and provides strategic vision and policy direction to four SMD corporations: SMD Clearinghouse; SMD Foundation; SMD Ventures; and SMD Services.

The vision shared among the corporations is of a “community that supports the independence, participation, and empowerment of persons of all abilities.” Each SMD corporation pursues a complementary mandate in working toward this vision.

The DRD is prepared primarily as an informational resource for consumers, professionals and publics interested in remaining current in disability related issues. An archive of past editions of the DRD is maintained on SMD’s web site (<http://www.smd.mb.ca>).

Published monthly (with a single summer edition for July and August), the DRD presents summaries of, and URL addresses for, notable disability-related content on the world-wide web (WWW). The DRD focuses on recently posted content but also includes coverage of other web pages of interest. The URL addresses cited in the DRD are current at the time of publication, but as content on the web is continually revised, the addresses in the DRD may not remain current.

The DRD is prepared for SMD Alliance by The Project Group (TPG) Consulting Cooperative Ltd., a Winnipeg-based consulting firm. Neither SMD nor TPG are responsible for the accuracy or reliability of the content cited in the DRD.

Readers interested in learning more about SMD Alliance are invited to visit: <http://www.smd.mb.ca> or to contact the agency by e-mail at info@smd.ca. Readers are also invited to send comments and suggestions regarding the DRD to this same e-mail address.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible copiers and printers - by Peter Abrahams (*IT-Director*). "I attended the e-Access '08 conference and the Xerox stand caught my eye with a simple solution to make their devices more accessible. We all use copiers, printers and faxes on a regular basis as well as other domestic devices such as set top boxes, washing machines and entertainment centres. Over a few years the user interface for all these devices has moved from switches, dials and lights to touch sensitive screens. This move has benefited the manufacturers and many users but has made the devices more difficult, if not impossible, to use by people with certain disabilities."

<http://www.it-director.com/business/compliance/content.php?cid=10479>

Accessible News #34 - Spring 2008 - Contents:

- [CSUN Round-Up](#)
- [French Language Closed Captioning for the House of Commons Provided by PWGSC's Translation Bureau](#)
- [Aroga Expands its Operations](#)
- [Call for Blind and Partially Sighted Athletes - Nominations for T-Base Annual Sponsorship](#)
- [Ontario Businesses, Schools, Taking Accessibility to New Levels](#)
- [US TEITAC Report Released](#)
- [News Bits](#)
- [Upcoming Conferences in Canada](#)

<http://www.at-links.gc.ca/as/zx21034e.asp#b0>

The Future of Usability Testing - by Peter Abrahams (*IT-Director*). "I recently chaired a round table on the Future of Usability Testing. It was sponsored by Techsmith who supply the Usability Testing Tool Morae (see my [earlier article](#)). The invited attendees included developers, usability experts, an internet psychologist, and journalists all with considerably understanding and strong opinions about usability. I came with a strong interest in accessibility, which to a great extent can be seen as a subset of the usability requirements."

<http://www.it-director.com/business/compliance/content.php?cid=10495>

NSCIA Board Member Joins Accessible Racing Team - "Drivers with Disabilities to Race Against Able-Bodied Drivers in Modified Race Cars in Reality Show. Accessible Racing of New Hampshire named six celebrity drivers for their Accessible Racing Driving Experience Reality Show including Veronica Gonnello (able bodied), who is a National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA) board member, Abilities Expo Show Manager and Accessible Racing Board Member."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=1746>

Report to the Access Board: Refreshed Accessibility Standards and Guidelines in Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology - "This report contains a

set of recommended standards and guidelines that the Access Board may use to update regulations that implement two laws regarding accessible information and communication technology (ICT): Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the Communications Act of 1996. These two laws help to form the legal backbone of accessibility in the American information and communications technology (ICT) environment. In broad

terms, Section 508 requires federal agencies to use accessibility as a selection criterion when procuring ICT, while the Access Board's Section 255 requires certain telecommunications-related equipment and services to be designed, developed and fabricated to be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, if readily achievable."

<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/refresh/report/>

Should websites include sign language? - by Peter Abrahams (*IT-Director*). "People who are deaf or have a hearing impairment can have problems access websites and other ICT systems. Guideline 1 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) states 'Provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content'. The guidelines suggest that text is a suitable equivalent for auditory content and should include text of any audio files and captioning of any audio-video file. Although text is an important aid to people who cannot hear it is not necessarily a complete or optimum solution. The reason is that sign language is their first language and written English is a second language. As I am based in the UK I will write about British Sign Language (BSL) rather than International sign language (ISL) or American Sign Language (ASL) although the basic message is the same."

<http://www.it-director.com/business/compliance/content.php?cid=10504>

Three Quarters of Ontario Transit Providers Commit to Announce all Stops - "The Ontario Human Rights Commission today announced that thirty-one transit providers have committed to begin announcing all stops by this fall. This result was obtained after the Commission launched an inquiry into Transit Stop Announcements in the fall of 2007 to help riders with disabilities."

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/transitreport>

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ADVOCACY

Democrat wants to require disability-friendly Internet phones, video - Posted by Anne Broache. "At the moment, most TVs and telephones must be outfitted with special features for people with hearing, vision, and speech impairments under U.S. law. Now an influential Democratic congressman wants to expand those requirements to their Internet counterparts. The [bill \(PDF\)](#) being drafted by Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) would require, at least in some cases, dramatic changes in the way Internet phone- and video-related products are designed, while making it more difficult than under existing law for companies to claim exemptions from those requirements."

http://news.cnet.com/8301-10784_3-9933597-7.html?tag=ne.fd.mnbc

Escaping the Nursing Home - by Richard Holicky (*New Mobility*). "People end up in nursing homes for a variety of reasons, the biggest four being they have nowhere else to go or can't find accessible housing, they're unable to secure reliable and affordable home health services, they are shipped to nursing homes to convalesce from surgery and never leave, or they lack the necessary family support. And it's not just poor people, the uninsured or the uninformed who end up in confinement."

<http://www.newmobility.com/articleView.cfm?id=11164>

Force of nature - by Sunil Peck (*Disability Now*). “Lawyer, author and campaigner Harriet McBryde Johnson has taken on the notorious bio-ethicist Peter Singer. She tells Sunil Peck why she believes equality is an unrealistic goal. Harriet McBryde Johnson has won plaudits in America for raising the profile of disability rights among a mainstream audience. She has waged a campaign since 1991 against the Telethon, a television event which uses negative and mawkish images of disabled people to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association; she has faced-off with a controversial bio-ethicist; and she is an accomplished author.”

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/living/features/force-of-nature>

ICBL urges all countries to join the UN disability rights convention - “Landmine survivors and all people with disabilities can now count on a powerful tool to ensure their rights are respected and their needs met, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) said today, hailing the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Disability Rights Convention). The Convention, considered the first major human rights treaty of this century, was signed in December 2006. It will enter into force tomorrow, 30 days after the deposit of the 20th ratification (by Ecuador, on 3 April 2008).”

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/ASAZ-7E9H9Z?OpenDocument>

UN celebrates disability treaty - by Geoff Adams-Spink (*BBC*). “The UN is celebrating the coming into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) - a landmark agreement that aims to give the world’s 650m disabled people full equality. Adopted in 2006, and opened for signature in March last year it took effect on 3 May a month after the 20th nation ratified it - in this case Ecuador. This is fast, officials say, reflecting the commitment of some nations to the treaty’s goals, as well as pressure from the disability lobby.”

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7392192.stm

May 2008 Protests of Electroshock - “Electroshock -- also known as electroconvulsive therapy - was protested by MindFreedom members in Cork, Ireland; Ottawa, Canada; Montreal, Canada. Here are brief reports from each.”

<http://www.mindfreedom.org/kb/mental-health-abuse/electroshock/protests-may-2008>

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EDUCATION

More Support For Students With Disabilities - “The [B.C.] provincial government is enhancing access to post-secondary education for students with permanent disabilities, Advanced Education Murray Coell announced today. British Columbia signed the Labour Market Agreement (correction made May 9, 2008 – this originally was cited as the Labour Market Development Agreement) with the Government of Canada on Feb. 20, 2008, which included an allocation of \$12 million over six years to benefit persons with disabilities. The funding will help create programs to increase opportunities for post-secondary education and training that will support people with disabilities in finding employment and furthering their careers.”

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008AE0029-000715.htm

Professionalizing Federation Practices A Review of University Programs Complementing the LCB - by Daniel B. Frye and Barbara Pierce (*NFB*). “At the center of the collage Dr.

Edward Bell greets his daughter Samantha, who has just arrived for lunch with her daddy. To the left Dr. Ruby Ryles displays an embroidered quilt top of Beatrix Potter characters that she is making for a friend’s baby. Behind these two photos can be seen part of the Louisiana Tech campus. In 1997 Joanne Wilson, former executive director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind (LCB), entered into a new and ambitious partnership with Louisiana Tech University to establish a master’s-level program for training orientation and mobility (O&M) instructors. Different from conventional university programs, this degree was established and designed to train O&M instructors using consumer-developed theories of structured discovery and immersion in nonvisual techniques. The presence of one of America’s finest orientation and adjustment centers for blind adults and a receptive university in the same small town, Ruston, Louisiana, has proven a fortunate coincidence, one which has benefited hundreds of blind people across the country for the last eleven years.”

<http://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/Publications/bm/bm08/bm0805/bm080506.htm>

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EMPLOYMENT

Social Security Announces Improvements to the Ticket to Work Program - “The Social Security Administration issued final rules designed to improve the Ticket to Work program. The changes will improve the effectiveness of the Ticket program in assisting beneficiaries with disabilities who want to work. ‘These rules outline a new and improved Ticket to Work program and are based on learning from our experiences, listening to input from interested parties, and responding to their suggestions,’ said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. ‘Beneficiaries with disabilities will have greater flexibility and expanded choices in obtaining the services they need to attain their employment goals’.”

<http://www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/pr/tickettowork-pr-0508.htm>

Neil Squire Society Receives Funding to Empower People with Disabilities - (*Prime NewsWire*). - “The Neil Squire Society will receive up to \$1,339,369 to deliver Employ-Ability, a project that will help up to 214 people with major physical disabilities who require specific adaptations to take part in an employment assistance program. The announcement was made by Mr. James Moore, Member of Parliament (MP) for Port Moody-Westwood-Port Coquitlam, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. During the announcement, MP Moore said, ‘Our government is ensuring that Canadians with disabilities have access to the training they need to find and keep quality jobs’.”

<http://www.neilsquire.ca/section.asp?catid=121&subid=130&pageid=524>

Where the Blind Work - “What kind of work are blind people doing? How do they do it? Why should employers hire a blind person? What careers are YOU interested in pursuing? Blind people are working in a wide variety of jobs doing work that people mistakenly believe require sight. Blind students are often ‘tracked’ into certain fields, whether they are interested in them or not. Within these pages, you will find written personal accounts of the various types of

employment that the blind are engaged in, how they do it, how does a person enter the field, and what positive influences helped the person to achieve their goal.”

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Blind_Work.asp

WID Releases Ground-Breaking Manual on Work Incentives and Benefits - “State and federal rules on access to health coverage and benefits can bewilder even a Ph.D. Some programs, like Social Security disability benefits, have thousands of pages of laws and regulations governing them. Every program has its own unique set of rules on interaction with other programs. The resulting confusion can have a devastating impact on people using more than one program or contemplating a return to work.”

<http://www.wid.org/wid-releases-ground-breaking-manual-on-work-incentives-and-benefits/>

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ETHICS

Norms and Deviations: Who’s to Say? - “A letter published in the May 26 issue of Time magazine protests the inclusion, in Time’s list of the world’s 100 most influential people, of two researchers allied with the organization Cure Autism Now (a name that speaks for itself). The letter writer declares himself to be “outraged” because, in his view, “Autistic spectrum disorders are not diseases, but rather markers of ‘genetic difference’ in the same vein as skin color [and] gender.” He equates the search for a cure with genocide – it’s “part of a campaign to wipe out ASDs” [autism spectrum disorder] – and he wants the world to know that those to whom the cure would be offered neither need it nor desire it: “I speak for many when I say we are happy the way we are.”

<http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/norms-and-deviations-whos-to-say/>

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GENERAL INTEREST

Ban Ki-moon hails New Zealand’s leadership on disability issues – “Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today congratulated the Government and people of New Zealand, the recipient of this year’s Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award, for their efforts to improve the lives of those living with disabilities. The Award is presented by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute to a UN Member State that makes noteworthy progress towards the full participation of citizens with disabilities as called for in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In his remarks at the award ceremony, Mr. Ban noted that New Zealand is widely recognized for its leadership on disability issues, particularly as a leading proponent of the Disabilities Convention, which just entered into force on 3 May.”

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26585&Cr=disab&Cr1=>

Berkeley man on mission to aid disabled Iraqis - by Kevin Fagan (*SF Chronicle*). “Bruce Curtis is used to dealing with obstacles - stairs in front of a door, uneven spots in a sidewalk, telephones that need dialing. He’s quadriplegic, in a wheelchair. Surmounting those challenges is no easy feat. But few challenges are quite like what he’s about to undertake when he flies out of the Bay Area Thursday. The Berkeley resident and disability rights

advocate is going to Iraq, where in the middle of a war, with a shattered economy and violence rippling the countryside, he will train 35 disabled Iraqis how to fight for their rights.”

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/05/01/BARR10EHMP.DTL&type=newsbayarea>

Canadian High Commissioner: Disability is not the work of witches - “Ghanaian journalist Peggy Ama Donkor is considered one of the most astute and hardworking journalists in this country. No wonder she was adjudged the Best Journalist in 2006/2007 for her commitment to fine reportage. She was, among others, awarded a scholarship to add colour to her journalism studies in Cardiff, Wales. She is physically challenged but did brilliant stories for the public broadcaster, GBC, that most of her able bodied colleagues wouldn’t have thought of doing. As she narrated in a BBC documentary, most of the stories were done with her own finances. Her story is no different from physically challenged persons in this country working in several departments in this country. Some of them are competent lawyers, accountants, lecturers, artists and many more.”

<http://www.myjoyonline.com/health/200805/16445.asp>

‘Disability can have an upside’ - by Peter White (*BBC*). “Here’s a conundrum for you. What do these people have in common; Rabbi Lionel Blue, commentator Murray Walker, writer and poet Gwyneth Lewis, rugby player Kenny Logan, comedienne Liz Carr and the Archbishop of Canterbury? Tough one, eh! Well they would all admit, more or less reluctantly, to having a disability. If you had asked an equally diverse group 50 years ago, this almost certainly would not have been the case. The idea of categorising such a disparate group of people as disabled is pretty new; it really starts in the late sixties, when a variety of activists began to campaign seriously for two things - more rights, and more money.”

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7408603.stm>

Myanmar List of Non Government Organizations (NGOs) - “From past disaster situations people with disabilities are frequently left out of relief efforts. Most commonly, any assistance comes from local organizations that work with people with disabilities—who usually are very cash strapped themselves and have great difficulty gearing up to meet the tremendous demands placed on them. Thus, based on past trends, here is a partial list of NGOs in Myanmar.”

http://www.abilitymagazine.com/news_Myanmar.html

Scotiabank Launches Disability Protection to Create Mortgage Insurance Triumvirate -

CNW/ - “Scotiabank today announced the launch of a new insurance product offering disability protection to mortgage clients across Canada. The Bank is now the first major Canadian financial institution with mortgage product offerings at three levels of personal protection, including loss of life and health crisis.”

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/May2008/26/c4199.html>

Structured Discovery Learning Goes to Turkey - by Robert Leslie Newman (*NFB*). “‘Merhaba’ (Turkish for ‘hello’) greeted the six members of the Blind Corps team upon our arrival at the Istanbul national airport. We were the guests of Beyazey, an Istanbul-based consumer group of blind people and the Istanbul Municipality, our sponsors in a joint demonstration project called ‘Futures in Blindness,’ bringing structured discovery learning to the blind of Turkey. The

impetus for our invitation came from the recognition that, within the Turkish population of seventy million, approximately seven-hundred-fifty thousand have a severe vision loss, and of these 85 percent of working-age people are unemployed. In Turkey rehabilitation services for the blind are in many respects neither well organized nor up to date. Mostly the blind of Turkey wish to make a positive change in this situation. The Blind Corps team, with more than one hundred years of experience in blindness rehabilitation among us, were honored to be asked and delighted to demonstrate what we know to be the best method for bringing independence to the blind.”

<http://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/Publications/bm/bm08/bm0805/bm080509.htm>

When Mom cares for adult daughter, Mother’s Day carries new meaning - by Paul Aronsohn (*Spinal Cord*). “It wasn’t supposed to be this way. At age 72, my mother, Margot, should be enjoying her ‘golden’ years. After all, she worked most of her life, raised four kids and survived three divorces. Mom’s due a little rest and relaxation. Conversely, at age 45, my sister Patti should be knee deep in the ‘busy’ years. She should be working long hours, raising children and sharing life with a special someone. But about 20 years ago, their lives ended up on a different path. In 1989, we learned that Patti had a devastating medical condition - one that still has not been effectively diagnosed.”

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=1726>

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GOVERNMENT

U.S.

Disaboom Announces Launch of Official Barack Obama Profile - “Disaboom, the premier resource and online community for people living with or touched by disability, today announced that Barack Obama has chosen Disaboom as a venue for outreach and discussion regarding his positions on disability issues. Visitors to <http://www.disaboom.com/barackobama> will find not only a profile and biography of Senator Obama, but also his position statements, his record on disability issues, a blog detailing both campaign events and key statements, video messaging from Obama, and opportunities for Disaboom community members to ask questions of the candidate and participate in political forums.”

<http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/marketwire/0395665.htm>

Senate passes bill banning genetic discrimination - (*LA Times*). “The vast promise of an era of personalized medicine based on genetic testing long has been haunted by a disturbing possibility: The same data that could alert people to serious medical problems might be used to deny them jobs or insurance coverage. But Thursday, the Senate voted 95 to 0 to outlaw such discrimination, with the House expected to add its approval quickly. The bill, which President Bush has agreed to sign, does more than protect those who undergo genetic testing: It marks a significant milestone in the effort to develop a 21st century architecture of laws to govern the revolutionary changes sweeping science and medicine.”

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/front/la-na-genes25apr25.1.1476561.story>

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HEALTH/WELLNESS

Key influences on health inequalities - (*VicHealth*). "VicHealth has identified tackling health inequalities as an overarching theme of their Strategic Priorities 2006–2009. To do this, VicHealth focuses on three objectives: 1) Reduce health inequalities experienced by those most affected by social and economic inequality; 2) Improve knowledge in order to understand and respond to health inequalities; and 3) Influence social and economic policy that has an effect on health inequalities. VicHealth seeks to improve the health of all Victorians but targets activities towards: disadvantaged areas, lower socioeconomic groups, Indigenous and refugee communities, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged children and young people."
http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=208292

Study finds arthritis can be a barrier for adults seeking to manage diabetes through exercise - "More than half of adults with diagnosed diabetes also have arthritis, a painful condition that can be a barrier to physical activity -- an important health strategy for managing diabetes, according to a study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in today's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Nationwide, 46.4 million adults have arthritis and 20.6 million adults have diabetes, with nearly 7 in 10 having had diabetes diagnosed by a health professional. Research shows that engaging in joint-friendly activities such as walking, swimming, biking can help manage both conditions."
<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=38201>

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LEGAL

ACLU Urges House Committee to Support ADA Restoration Act - "The American Civil Liberties Union applauded the House Committee on Education and Labor for holding a hearing on H.R. 3195, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Restoration Act. The original ADA passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in 1990 and was heralded by Republican and Democratic leaders as the "emancipation proclamation" for people with disabilities. However, due to a series of Supreme Court decisions that have narrowed the definition of disability under the ADA, the vast majority of ADA cases brought against private employers have been dismissed by the courts."
http://www.abilitymagazine.com/news_ACLU.html

Appeals Court Rules that U.S. Currency Must be Redesigned to be Accessible: American Foundation for the Blind Hails the Decision - (*AFB*). "Today, the American Foundation for the Blind applauded a federal appeals court ruling that the U.S. Treasury Department is violating the law by not designing and issuing accessible paper money. The decision, issued earlier today, upholds a 2006 federal district court ruling in a case filed by the American Council of the Blind against the U.S. Treasury."
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=47&DocumentID=4155>

Law school symposium explores disability rights in Asia - "As many as 400 million people with disabilities in Asia lack protective legislation. The Washington Law School Foundation hosted a two-day symposium last week that discussed disability rights in Asia. The event drew

attention to legal and human rights issues. The symposium, held Thursday and Friday in William H. Gates Hall, was the first academic conference of its kind on this budding issue. Among the many distinguished guest speakers was former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, who is the father of a disabled son. He urged the United States to ratify the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.”

<http://thedaily.washington.edu/2008/4/30/law-school-symposium-explores-disability-rights-as/>

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel - “The Department of Transportation is amending its Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) rules to apply to foreign carriers. The final rule also adds new provisions concerning passengers who use medical oxygen and passengers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The rule also reorganizes and updates the entire ACAA rule. The Department will respond to some matters raised in this rulemaking by issuing a subsequent supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking.”

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/.site/news/Stock%20News/1549739/>

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MEDIA

Disability hasn't stopped dancer from catching a break - by Fannie Sunshine (*Inside Toronto*). “Luca ‘Lazylegz’ Patuelli isn’t going to let a muscle disorder stop him from driving, swimming, skiing and, most importantly, breakdancing. ‘There is nothing wrong with me and there is nothing wrong with you,’ the 23-year-old told students at Bloorview Kids Rehab during a performance at the Bayview and Eglinton avenues hospital Friday, May 23. ‘You find ways of doing the things you want to do.’ Born with arthrogyrosis, a muscle disorder limiting joint motion, Patuelli has undergone 16 surgeries on his legs and spine since the age of eight months. But that hasn’t stopped the breakdancer, who has performed on stage with Kanye West, k-os and the Nappy Roots from following his passion for dance.”

<http://www.insidetoronto.ca/Lifestyle/Arts/article/48740>

New Media Trends: Disability-Friendly or Not? - by Jeff Shannon (*New Mobility*). “Every year Hollywood studios and television networks bet their future fortunes on an expensive, nerve-racking ritual known as pilot season. From January through April, approximately 300 new series are pitched to the studios by hopeful writers and producers. From these, perhaps 50 scripts will actually be commissioned and written, and of those, only six to 10 scripts will be selected for pilot production. Against these odds, it seems almost miraculous that two recent situation comedy pilots prominently featuring disabled characters – ‘Special Unit’ and ‘I’m With Stupid’ – were not only pitched and scripted, but actually produced. Although neither show was selected for full-series production, getting as far as pilot production seems to indicate that Hollywood’s attitude toward disability is slowly but surely progressing.”

<http://www.newmobility.com/articleView.cfm?id=11162>

Snap! winners announced - “There were over 1,000 ‘stunning’ photos and stories entered in this year’s competition, but they couldn’t all be winners. Snap! offers a unique insight into what it is like to have a learning disability through the eyes of those closest to it. Each year Mencap looks for photos of or taken by people with a learning disability.”

<http://www.mencap.org.uk/news.asp?id=3051&pageno=&year=&menuId=90>

Student with Visual Impairment Creates Art for a Purpose - ([PR.com](http://www.pr.com)). “Jeff Hanson is not a regular teenager. Jeff is swamped with work from people commissioning him for one of his colorful paintings. Orders for his beautiful art just keep coming in, and they command top dollar. Jeff is not only a prolific artist working for multiple causes, he is also visually impaired, but his paintings are filled with color, shape and harmony. Sir Elton John and movie director Harold Ramis both display Jeff’s art in their homes.”

<http://www.pr.com/press-release/83591>

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MEDICAL

New Stem Cell Therapy May Aid the Repair of Damaged Brains - by Sean Wagner (*Blackwell Publishing*). “According to some experts, newly born neuronal stem cells in the adult brain may provide a therapy for brain injury. But if these stem cells are to be utilized in this way, the process by which they are created, neurogenesis, must be regulated.”

<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/press/pressitem.asp?ref=1744>

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POLICY/RESEARCH

Department of Health announces adult autism strategy – “Care services Minister Ivan Lewis today announced £500,000 for Government research into the numbers of adults with autism and their specific transitions needs. This prevalence study will inform the first ever Government strategy on adults with autism and Asperger’s syndrome, due to be published next year. The number of children with autism is as high as 1 in 100 (according to Prof. Baird’s 2006 study) and this prevalence study will give us a more accurate picture of how many adults have the condition. Part of the new research will focus on the period of transition to adult life and will inform service planning for adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). This will be led by Prof. Baird and it will examine the lessons and challenges in the transition process and focus on areas such as mental health, social care, housing and further education needs.”

<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=38184>

Correlations of Autistic Behaviors Shown in Children with Down Syndrome - “In a continuation of his research looking at children with a co-diagnosis of both autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other well-known genetic disorders, Dr. Walter E. Kaufmann and colleagues recently published a study that examined the difference in brain structure between children with either Down syndrome alone and children with both Down syndrome and ASD. Dr. Kaufmann and his research team at the Center for Genetic Disorders of Cognition and Behavior (GCB Center) at the Kennedy Krieger Institute believe this will provide more clues to the cause of autism, and lead to better diagnosis and care of children with both Down syndrome and ASD.”

http://www.abilitymagazine.com/news_Autistic_Down.html

National mental health and disability employment strategy - (*Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations*). “As a part of the Social Inclusion Agenda, the federal

government is developing a National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy. The discussion paper outlines the background and purpose of the strategy and invites comment.”
http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=208946

Special education needs of 24 per cent of kids with disabilities unmet: StatsCan - “The parents of roughly one-quarter of children with disabilities believe their child’s needs for special education are going unmet, while nearly half say they experience difficulty getting special education for their child, according to a new report. The latest data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) released Tuesday by Statistics Canada finds that about 36,600 children with disabilities whose parents believed they need special education did not receive this type of schooling. This accounts for about 24.3 per cent of children with disabilities who were attending school.”
<http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5j3cAOU1smB4BFr5-8dC4GZywSCCw>
<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/080527/d080527a.htm> (PALS report)

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REHABILITATION

Disaboom.com - “Disaboom.com was founded by Dr. J. Glen House, a physician specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation who is also a quadriplegic. His firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and those whose lives they touch has driven the Disaboom.com mission: to create the first comprehensive, evolving source of information, insight, and personal engagement for the disability community.”
<http://aboutus.disaboom.com/>

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SPORTS

Disablist Olympic guide to be ‘rewritten’ - by Elizabeth Choppin (*DisabilityNow*). “Organisers of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games have been forced to rewrite an official guide for volunteers that was declared “outdated and disablist” by disability groups. Reports that the guide would be taken off the Paralympic website and rewritten came after complaints this week that it used negative stereotypes of disabled people.”
<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/disablist-olympic-guide-to-be-2018rewritten2019>

Disability? What disability? - by Scott Radley (*The Hamilton Spectator*). “Paraplegic golfer ‘Fairway Frankie’ Peters recently connected for a hole-in-one. It may have been his first round of the year and he may have been using new clubs he wasn’t used to yet but, the second he hit the ball, he knew it was a pretty good shot. Teeing off into a stiff headwind on the 103-yard par 3 at Legends on the Niagara, the line wasn’t perfect but the weight was great. The first bounce came just in front of the green. Then the ball took a nice kick to the left, made a beautiful sound and disappeared from Frank Peter’s view.”
<http://www.thespec.com/Sports/article/372425>

Wheelchair athlete Adams aiming for Beijing - (*CBC*). “Jeff Adams says he is going to get back into training in an attempt to make it to the Beijing Paralympic Games. And he’s getting a

financial incentive from his lawyer. The Canadian wheelchair athlete, who was exonerated by the Court of Arbitration for Sport and had his two-year suspension for failing a drug test in 2006 eliminated in a decision made last Friday, told a news conference in Toronto on Tuesday he will get back on the track.”

<http://www.cbc.ca/sports/amateur/story/2008/05/20/adams-media.html>

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TECHNOLOGY

CNS and SCYP Join Forces - “The office of [Central Network Services \(CNS\)](#) at the [University of Toronto](#) has agreed to collaborate with the SCYP team for the creation of a [WiFi-Based Indoor Positioning System](#) that would work in a way similar to the primarily outdoors Global Positioning System (GPS). This indoor system will allow students to design applications and services that provide members of the [University of Toronto](#) community with information relevant to their particular location. For example, a staff member may be able to retrieve the necessary information to determine the location of the nearest accessible washrooms while an ESL student streams real-time captioning data in a given class.”

<http://scampus.blogspot.com/>

Collaboration software opens up the world to people with disabilities - by Peter Abrahams (*IT-Director*). “I was speaking to an accessibility guru in a large government department and she told me a distressing story. An up-and-coming member of staff who is profoundly deaf was invited to attend an important meeting. A sign language interpreter should have been booked for the meeting but that had not happened. Unable to follow, or participate in, the meeting the deaf member of staff left. A month later management were reviewing a promotion for him and it was rejected because he left the meeting. We could argue that the HR department failed in their duty but I would rather investigate how technology could have help to avoid the situation.”

<http://www.it-director.com/business/compliance/content.php?cid=10473>

The KnfbReader Mobile: An Individual Perspective - by Michael D. Barber (*NFB*). “It is late Thursday evening, and I have just checked into my motel room in a small Iowa town. After I get my computer set up (always a high priority), I start looking around for printed material I know exists in this room. For instance, I want to know what TV channels are available. I search to the left of the TV, and there it is--a letter-sized sheet of paper. From my pocket I take my Nokia N82 cell phone and turn it on by pressing a button on the top of the phone. Soon I hear the familiar Nokia music sounds letting me know the phone is active. Then I press a button just to the left and a bit above the five-way scroll box on the phone. I hear a message that says, ‘Hello. I am the knfbReader Mobile’.”

<http://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/Publications/bm/bm08/bm0805/bm080508.htm>

Nectec unveils new guideline for innovation - by Jirapan Boonnoon (*The Nation*). “Assistive Technology Centre, a centre under the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (Nectec) that oversees the development of assistive technology for disabled people, has developed a technology development roadmap as a guideline for new innovations and accessories which will allow the disabled to access universal services. Chief of assistive technology at Nectec, Wantanee Phantachat said the focus this year was divided into four

areas including transportation and mobility, home and environment, communication, and IT accessibility. The transportation and mobility initiative will focus on developing new technologies, such as wheel chairs and accessories, as well as aids to lift patients.”
http://nationmultimedia.com/2008/05/05/technology/technology_30072226.php

Reading just got easier for people with print disabilities - “Microsoft Corp. today joined with industry and advocacy group leaders worldwide to launch new software that will allow people who are blind and print-disabled to navigate text with all the agility of their sighted peers. The new technology will help level the playing field for an estimated 160 million people who are blind or living with vision loss worldwide who have access to only five percent of published material in a format they can read.”
<http://www.cnib.ca/en/news/archive/05072008-daisy-xml.aspx>

Microsoft grows DAISY for blind computer users while Adobe wilts - by Eric Lai (Computerworld). “The release of an esoteric plug-in for a 20-year-old piece of software normally doesn’t merit much attention – except when the software is the ubiquitous Microsoft Word and the add-on could have a major positive effect on the 1.5 million blind or visually impaired Americans who use computers, the millions more like them around the globe, and, potentially, tens or hundreds of millions of people worldwide with developmental disabilities or reading problems. Earlier this week, Microsoft announced the availability of a plug-in (downloadable from openxmlcommunity.org) that lets users of Word 2007, 2003 and XP easily save documents in the DAISY (Digital Accessible Information SYstem) XML format.”
http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&taxonomyName=open_source&articleId=9084438&taxonomyId=88&intsrc=kc_feat

Technology helps disabled voters - by Dwayne Tingley “The proud smile on Jean Daniel Ouellette’s face yesterday afternoon told a story of accomplishment. For the first time, the 25-year-old Moncton resident, who has had cerebral palsy his entire life, voted independently and delivered a secret ballot in its truest sense. Elections New Brunswick has introduced technology for the first time to allow seriously disabled residents the opportunity to vote by secret ballot. The technology is being used for the May 12 municipal elections.”
<http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/news/article/287846>

Telecare: Tomorrow’s World - by Steve Sadler “Half a century of telecare has brought unimaginable developments in the support of people in their own homes and successfully improved the lives of millions. Older people and those with long term needs are able to continue to live at home well beyond past expectations. The author describes how smarter sensors and new ways of processing information mean that care teams are able to respond more proactively and effectively. He looks at the economic benefits to the NHS and local councils and glimpses the future for the next half century.”
<http://www.publicnet.co.uk/features/2008/05/02/telecare-tomorrow%E2%80%99s-world/>

www.try-it.ie – “The web-based library of electronic assistive technology is funded under The Enhancing Disability Services Project (EDS), part of a Multi-Annual Investment Programme for Disability by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and managed by POBAL. This project has come about in response to:

- the evident need of people with disabilities in Ireland;

- the deficiencies in access, assessment and provision of assistive technology (AT) to the disabled community in Ireland;
- the rapidly developing area of electronic assistive technology (EAT) and the huge potential that this area holds for empowering, providing independence, and increasing quality of life for people with disabilities;
- the need to communicate, educate, network, and share experiences amongst people working in the EAT area and those wishing to enter it,
- the common technological solutions that can benefit people with a range of disabilities, and as a result,
- the need for organisations representing diverse and disparate sectors of the disability community, all of which can benefit from EAT, to work in a cohesive and integrated manner to optimise the service received by their clients.”

<http://test.try-it.ie/d/?q=node/2>

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CONFERENCES

(🌟 New Conferences)

Audio Conference Series Session Schedule - “All Sessions are scheduled from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (90 minute sessions) Central Time Zone(CT). The program is available in three formats:

- Teleconference
- Streaming Audio via the Internet
- Real-time Captioning via the Internet

All sessions will have a written transcript as well as a digital recording of the session [archived](#) on this site.” The dates of the sessions are listed on the site. The first session titled ‘Employer Best Practices: Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities’ will be presented on May 20, 2008.”

<http://www.ada-ohio.org/informat.htm>

CANADA

CHHA - IFHOH, Congress 2008 - July 2-6, 2008 | Vancouver, British Columbia. “The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People invite you to attend the International Congress for persons with hearing loss to be held in Canada at the fabulous Sheraton Vancouver Wall Center in downtown Vancouver. Programs will be of

interest to all persons with hearing loss, and to those who live, work and are part of the lives of persons with hearing loss. This Congress is a 'must' if hearing loss has touched your life."
<http://www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com/>

Vision 2008, the 9th International Conference on Low Vision - July 7-11, 2008 | Montreal, Quebec. "In 2008, the 9th International Conference on Low Vision will be held from July 7 to 11 in Montréal, one of Canada's major cities. The Institut Nazareth & Louis-Braille (A Rehabilitation Centre specialized in visual impairment) and the University of Montréal's School of Optometry will oversee the organization of this Conference in partnership with the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) under the auspices of the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLRR)."
www.vision2008.ca

Brain Development & Learning Conference: Making Sense of the Science - July 12-15, 2008 | Vancouver, British Columbia. "An interdisciplinary conference devoted to improving children's lives by making cutting-edge research in neuroscience, child psychology, & medicine understandable & applicable to those who work with children on a daily basis."
http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/BDL_subpages/bdl.html

Biennial Conference - International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication - August 2-7, 2008 | Montreal, Quebec - "In August 2008 the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) will hold its 13th international conference in Montreal. ISAAC brings together people with communication disabilities, professionals, researchers, and academics from all over the world to present and discuss the latest advances for people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)."
http://www.isaac2008.org/ex_intro.html

21st RI World Congress - Disability Rights and Social Participation: Ensuring a Society for All - August 25-28, 2008 | Quebec City, Quebec. "The international community is facing a unique opportunity to drastically improve the living conditions of hundreds of millions of people with disabilities by implementing the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This treaty provides the framework for the development of good policies, actions and projects which can have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities all over the world. People with disability, their family and friends, human rights advocates, experts, government representatives, service providers and civil society leaders from all over the world will gather in Quebec City, Canada from August 25-28, 2008, for the 21st RI World Congress to discuss key disability issues and build partnerships."
<http://www.riquebec2008.org/>

Third ICOH Conference on Psychosocial Factors at Work - September 1-4, 2008 | Québec City, Quebec. "The Third ICOH-WOPS international conference "Psychosocial Factors at Work: From Knowledge to Action" will take place in Québec City, September 1-4, 2008. The two first International ICOH Conferences on Psychosocial Factors at Work were held in Copenhagen in 1998 and in Japan in 2005. Both conferences were highly successful attracting more than 300 international researchers in the field. The 2008 conference will address four major themes: Preventive interventions; Disability management and Return to work;

Psychological harassment at work; and Public policies on mental health at work. Papers will include mental health, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular diseases; quantitative and qualitative methodology. We hope that you will attend the Conference and it will be a pleasure to welcome you.”

<http://www.icoh-wops2008.com/Afficher.aspx?langue=en>

23rd year of the Canadian Seating & Mobility Conference - September 24-26, 2008 | Toronto Ontario. “This year’s program promises to offer an exciting and interesting variety of topics for all of us who work in the area of assistive technology. The Conference program consists of educational workshops, paper and poster presentations as well as keynote speaker. Our theme this year is ‘Life is a Highway ‘ and the Conference incorporates international speakers, issues and ideas to compliment the theme.”

<http://www.csmc.ca/>

Tenth International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility -

October 13-15, 2008 | Halifax, Nova Scotia. “The ASSETS series of conferences is aimed at providing a technical forum for presenting and disseminating innovative research results that address the use of computing and information technologies to help persons with disabilities.”

<http://www.sigaccess.org/assets08/>

The 3rd National Spinal Cord Injury Conference and the 16th Interurban Spinal Cord Injury Conference - November 6-8, 2008 | Toronto, Ontario. “Toronto Rehabilitation Institute is pleased to announce that the 3rd National Spinal Cord Injury Conference and the 16th Interurban Spinal Cord Injury Conference will be held as one national event on Spinal Cord Rehabilitation: Innovation, Impact and Future Directions at the Hilton Toronto Hotel on November 6, 7, 8, 2008. The conference will include a pre-course, plenary sessions, poster displays and concurrent workshops that are intended to promote collaboration and exchange among attendees in a variety of formats.”

<http://www.torontorehab.com/education/scic08index.htm>

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U.S.

NFB National Convention 2008 - June 29-July 5, 2008 | Dallas, Texas. “This year we are returning to Dallas and the beautiful Hilton Anatole Hotel, site of the 2006 convention. . . . The schedule this year is a departure from what many of us think of as the usual one.

Preconvention seminars for parents of blind children and other groups and set-up of the exhibit hall will take place on Sunday, June 29, and adjournment will be Saturday, July 5, at 5:00 p.m. Convention registration and registration packet pick-up for those who registered online will begin on Monday, June 30, and both Monday and Tuesday will be filled with meetings of divisions and committees, including the Tuesday morning annual meeting, open to all, of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind.”

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/National_Convention_2008.asp?SnID=1602533494

✿ **International Conference on Diverse Abilities & Innovative Supports 2008** – August 11-13, 2008 |.Honolulu, Hawaii. “This conference will take place August 11-13, 2008 in Honolulu, HI and is for family members, friends, professionals and people who have been labeled,

segregated or otherwise marginalized because their abilities were different than other people's."

<http://www.lifelibertyandthepursuitof.com/>

Toward Culturally Responsive Disability Services: An International Conference - October 6 and 7, 2008 | Niagara Falls, New York. Conference themes are:

- Cultural competency education and training (pre service and in service)
- Best practices in providing culturally responsive services in the disability and health services
- Acquiring and strengthening cultural competence through international experience
- Research on cultural competency

<http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/conference2008/index.html>

IDA 59th Annual Conference - October 29-November 1, 2008 | Seattle, Washington. "The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) is a scientific and educational nonprofit organization concerned with dyslexia and related language and learning difficulties. The IDA Annual Conference focuses on the latest advances in these and related fields. IDA is interested in a broad spectrum of research and practical presentations along these lines. The objective of the conference is to bring up-to-date information to a diverse audience that includes educators, researchers, physicians, psychologists, social workers, speech-language pathologists, administrators, parents, persons with dyslexia, and others."

<http://www.interdys.org/AnnualConference.htm>

Technology, Reading & Learning Diversity 2009 - January 22-24, 2009 | San Francisco California. "The mission of TRLD 2009 is "Opening Doors to Universal Learning." Universal Learning embodies the idea of equitable and flexible access to concepts and ideas for all students, all people. The digital age we live in creates a level playing field and multiple opportunities for all learners to achieve."

<http://www.trld.com/about/mission/index.html>

ATIA 2009 - January 28-31, 2009 | Orlando, Florida. "The ATIA Conference serves as a leading conference for the Assistive Technology community offering attendees the opportunity to participate in discussions with industry experts, learn about new technologies, best practices, and a host of specialized services. Assistive Technology products and technologies will be represented in various presentations, demonstrations and/or exhibits. In addition, hands-on labs will provide an opportunity to experiment with and evaluate the latest assistive technology devices and software."

<http://www.atia.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3280>

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OVERSEAS

11th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs - July 9-11, 2008 | University of Linz, Austria. "Over the last decades the advancement in Assistive Technologies (AT) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have significantly influenced the life of people with disabilities. According changes in awareness and understanding of disability as well as social and legal frameworks, driven by Disability Rights

and Independent Living Movements led to what is known as eAccessibility, Universal Design or eInclusion.”

<http://www.icchp.org/overview>

Disability Studies Conference - September 2-4, 2008 | Lancaster University, United Kingdom. “The fourth international disability studies conference will take place at Lancaster University, UK. The purpose of the conference is to bring together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and activists to share and debate research, ideas and developments in disability studies. A call for papers and posters will be issued in January 2008. The closing date for abstracts will be 30th April. Submissions are particularly welcomed from students, activists and first time presenters, activists and first time presenters. We seek to provide a supportive environment for people making their first conference presentations and to be as accessible as possible to all delegates.”
<http://www.disabilitystudies.net/?content=3>

7th ICDVRAT - International Conference Series On Disability, Virtual Reality And Associated Technologies - September 8-11, 2008 | Maia & Porto, Portugal. “For 2008, ICDVRAT and ArtAbilitation will be held as an integrated conference between 8-10 September at the Forum Maia and will conclude with a special session on the 11th September at the Casa da Musica. See Programme Overview and Call for Papers links for details.”
<http://www.icdvrat.reading.ac.uk/>

4th International Forum on Disability Management - September 22-24, 2008 | Berlin, Germany. “The professional performance of employees is the engine of a healthy society. Maintaining this capacity to work is the goal of disability management. Valuable knowledge remains in companies, people maintain their standard of living and social systems are unburdened. The International Forum on Disability Management has developed into a movement that spans continents, and new alliances have been formed. The people who meet at these gatherings are making a difference, tearing down walls between the concerned persons and developing cross-border return-to-work strategies. Disability managers from throughout the world exchange experiences and can learn from each other.”
<http://www.disability-manager.de/e/ifdm2008/index.html>

✿ **AAATE Seminar 2008 Socio-economic assessment of assistive technology in service delivery practice** - September 25-26, 2008 | Milano, Italy. “Nowadays, there is an increasing demand for evidence of the cost-effectiveness of assistive technologies. Policy makers and financing agencies need such information to properly allocate resources, control how efficiently they are used, stimulate the market, identify priority areas for research, understand possible wider implications at an overall societal level; professionals working in health care and social services – within today’s climate of accountability calling for evidence based practice - need to know whether their AT choices have proved effective within the rehabilitation programme, useful for the client, and efficient in using resources; industrialists need evidence of the added value their products or services may offer in comparison to those of other competitors; users and user organisations require to be fully involved in decision making processes and bring their expertise in this discussion.”
http://www.aaate.net/uploaded/81/aaate_workshop_2008_draft_programme.doc

19th IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics - July 5-9, 2009 | Paris, France.

“Every four years, the World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics represents a unique and irreplaceable event attended by experts from around the world to discuss the latest findings in the field of ageing. The 19th congress, which is taking place in Paris in 2009, is particularly important, as it coincides with an ideological u-turn. Lifespan extension and the growing number of elderly people, once considered as catastrophic, are now viewed as an indisputable progress.”

<http://www.gerontologyparis2009.com/site/view8.php>

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