



# Phoenix Rising

## Lifting You Higher

~ by George Klukowski (GK)

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A couple of weeks ago, while working on the 'Welcome to Phoenix' feature block on the home page of our new website, the phrase "lifting you higher" got stuck in my brain. I was trying to give readers a sense of Phoenix using only a handful of lines and this is what kept recurring. Ultimately, I found my way around this and delivered a message without using the phrase because part of me thought it might be a bit too commercial. Still, the idea continues to follow me as if it's trying to tell me something. When I think of it, I see the Phoenix soaring, wings proudly spread out, and the hopes and dreams of the people we serve being supported by those mighty wings. I know it's a bit fantastical but there is also some reality here. We work hard to lift people's spirits, to help them get to a better place, to become better advocates for themselves and their families, to help them become stronger community members. I think it also reflects how we feel about each other at Phoenix. It is a big, caring community and we do try to make each other feel good about who we are and what we are doing. So in some ways, "lifting you higher" may not be so farfetched after all, especially as a metaphor to remind us of who we are and the important work that we do.

In the coming months, we will really need to tap into our collective strength. With the Board's approval of the new Strategic Plan, we have a lot of work to do. From the many meetings I've had with staff over the last couple of months, it appears there is a lot of passion and enthusiasm for some of our strategic objectives, such as enhancing our profile in the community, engaging in a culture of volunteerism, fundraising, nurturing the strength and connectivity of Phoenix staff, reducing our administrative burdens so we can spend more time with the people we serve, and support agency-wide initiatives and diversify our funding. In the early fall, we will begin to ramp up our activities to address some of these areas. At that time, I will invite those of you who have expressed an interest in getting involved and together we will define the purpose, scope, and timelines associated with our objectives so the road ahead may be clear, focused, and realistic.

With our CARF accreditation set to lapse in March 2014, we will once again be undergoing a broad and comprehensive evaluation of our services including our client care, quality assurance, health and safety, and accessibility practices to name a few. The survey visit would normally occur at the expiration of the accreditation award. However, in light of the fact we will have to move from Store Street by no later than April 30, 2014, we expect to be in a state of chaos at that point and not prepared to properly defend our accreditation. We will request a resurvey date of June 2014. That said, the survey itself will evaluate our conformance to over 1,000 individual standards over the period of April 2011 to March 2014. In a nutshell, we need to stay focused on meeting those standards to the best of our ability.

On the subject of moving, we currently have one prospect we are pursuing in the Quadra/McKenzie area. To date, we have been turning over every stone to look for possibilities but the suitable prospects have been few and we are clearly running out of time. Should we secure the Quadra/McKenzie location, we would be looking at a move date of as early as December 1 or as late as January 1, 2014. The location has many of the essentials staff members indicated as priorities. It is not, however, a storefront and that is something we may have to develop elsewhere at some point in the future. Still, something else may materialize at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and, as nothing is set in stone yet, we are still technically shopping. So keep your eyes and ears open and feel free to forward any leads my way.

Last but not least, all of this will occur in a fiscally tight environment, something to which we have grown accustomed. The added burden though, is that government has not committed to fund the collective agreement as promised. To date, we have received no money despite having implemented all of the statutory increases as per the stipulations in the new collective agreement. We are getting different messages from different funders in terms of how they will handle the situation. No one has committed to pay for these

### Board of Directors

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## From The Heart

~ by GK

This past June at the Community, Family & Child Studies Department Awards Celebration, I had the honour of presenting this year's Phoenix Award to Camosun graduate, Danielle Robbins. Here's what her teachers had to say about her:

*Danielle shows great passion for wanting to support and advocate for populations in our community that are all too often marginalized, silenced and forgotten about. She understands the barriers that they face and is always respectful while maintaining good professional boundaries. She managed to successfully complete a challenging practicum while taking on an overload of classes, and maintain a caring disposition in her work with the homeless population as well as with fellow students in the CFCS program. In her work with the Dandelion Society, Reverend Al gave her very high praise. Given his vast experience, it is really saying something quite special (and important). He recognizes in her "a real gift" for work in this field, particularly with the street-involved and homeless populations. Danielle's caring spirit and warmth are contagious.*



Danielle and I chatted on the way to the reception that was held after the awards presentations. She handed me a small envelope and said it was a personalized "thank you". It was simply beautiful and heartfelt. Danielle introduced herself as a proud and passionate 21 year old First Nations woman from the Kwakwaka'wakw and Namgis Nations. Danielle grew up witnessing addictions and homelessness first hand and the devastation it can and often does create for a community. Her interest in pursuing college, and this program in particular, was to enable her to work as a homelessness outreach worker and to help First Nations people who continue to struggle with addictions and homelessness.

This is one very special young woman and one I will feature in an interview that will be published in the fall edition of 'Phoenix Rising'. In the meantime, we want to wish her all the very best in her future endeavors. I'm certain they will be meaningful and welcomed.

The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men.  
George Eliot

Placing one foot in front of the other,  
I've climbed to higher lengths.  
Reaching beyond my own limitations,  
to show my inner strength. No  
obstacle too hard, for this warrior to  
overcome. I'm just a man on a mission,  
to prove my disability hasn't won.  
Robert M. Hensel

## Phoenix Supported Employment

~ by Lois Gabbitous (LG)

As we all know, employment offers individuals the opportunity for self-actualization and personal development. Employment provides an opportunity for individuals to learn new skills, develop new relationships, and contribute to their community. Employment gives individuals a sense of purpose, pride, and accomplishment - employment supports individuals to participate fully and actively in their community.

Here at Phoenix, we have a number of capable individuals with diverse abilities who would be excellent candidates for long term, part-time employment. The Phoenix Supported Employment Program offers job training support and job coaching at no cost to the employer.

Businesses will be rewarded! Sector research tells us that individuals with developmental disabilities have fewer sick days, maintain longer term employment and perform equally well or better on actual job duties as their non-disabled colleagues.

**Please encourage the local businesses you patronize to include individuals with diverse abilities as part of their staff team.**

Interested employers are invited to contact the Phoenix Supported Employment office at (250) 370-2797 or [mmanning@phoenixhumanservices.org](mailto:mmanning@phoenixhumanservices.org) to set up an interview with one of these capable job seekers and to find out more about supported employment.

## “One Day” Event

Family and Friends,

One Day event, coming up Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at Topaz Park in Victoria.

From 11:00am to 3:00pm, there will be live music and performances on stage, special guests, barbecue lunch, refreshments, celebrity kickball tournament that everyone can play, One Day Kids Zone, One Day Creative Arts Marketplace, prizes, and special guests.

One Day Background: Community Living Month is a time when communities around the province and across Canada host events to celebrate the abilities and achievements of people living with developmental disabilities. ONE DAY has been our kick off to community living month in Victoria for the past four years, and brings all citizens of our community together in friendship, food, and fun.

One Day is a day to celebrate the diversity in our communities, where citizens can dance together, play together, and eat together.

Mark your calendars! Find us on Facebook!

Regards, (for the One Day Planning Committee)

Kristen Kay, B.A., B.S.W.

Director, Quality Assurance and Practice

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## Lifting You Higher

*(from page 1)*

increases with new funding. Across the province, agencies are dealing with things to the best of their ability. Reactions have included layoffs and outright refusals to pay the increases. We have contacted our local MLA's and banded together with several provincial organizations such as the Federation of Community Social Services BC, Inclusion BC, BCCEO Network, Board Voice, and the BC Association for Child Development and Intervention to lobby government to make good on its promises. When the legislature resumes its session in the fall, we are expecting to meet with Don McRae, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation, to explore what can be done to address this burden. So what else can we do? Probably the most important thing we can do is to continue to do what we do best and that is to lift people higher.

## SITI Conference 2013

**Note:** Please mark these dates in your calendars. Members-only registration will open in about a week. A preliminary version of conference schedule can be found at:

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



## Getting To Business

~ by G.K.

Just wanted to let you know that last month, Phoenix was awarded a \$1,000 grant from Enterprising Non-Profits to do some internal work exploring the viability of starting a social enterprise. I want to thank Lois for her initiative, skill, and hard work in pulling all of this together, as well as Michelle Colussi from the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal who provided technical support and consultation along the way.



Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness, to pull another hand into the light.

Norman B. Rice



## Sitting Is The New Smoking...

"Prolonged sitting is not what nature intended for us," says Dr. Camelia Davtyan, clinical professor of medicine and director of women's health at the UCLA Comprehensive Health Program.

"The chair is out to kill us," says James Levine, an endocrinologist at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine.

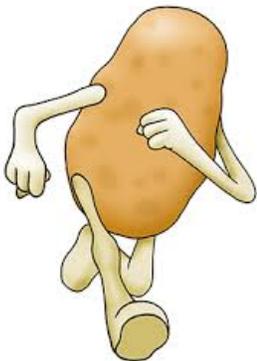
The human body was designed for walking, and people did a whole lot of that for millenniums. But lately, not so much. In general, scientists believe, most people now sit for more than half of their waking hours. Sadly, the sitting position exerts forces on the body that it's not built to accommodate, Davtyan says, and so, as comfy as it may seem, couch potato-hood can lead to a host of woes, including poor circulation and assorted aches and pains.

Sitting at your desk for hours on end, slaving away diligently, can increase your chances of getting a promotion - but also diabetes, heart disease or even an early grave. A study published in the journal *Diabetologia* in November 2012 analyzed the results of 18 studies with a total of nearly 800,000 participants. When comparing people who spent the most time sitting with those who spent the least time, researchers found increases in the risks of diabetes (112%), cardiovascular events (147%), death from cardiovascular causes (90%) and death from all causes (49%).



"Sitting is the new smoking," says Anup Kanodia, a physician and researcher at the Center for Personalized Health Care at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center. As evidence, he cites an Australian study published in October 2012 in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* that compared the two pastimes. Every hour of TV that people watch, presumably while sitting, cuts about 22 minutes from their life span, the study's authors calculated.

The good news is that another showed that simply going for a two-minute walk every 20 minutes can greatly reduce the risk of sitting.



So stay active and keep moving during your day.  
(This article is courtesy of George's chiropractor's monthly newsletter)

It is important that an aim never be defined in terms of a specific activity or method. It must always relate to a better life for everyone.

William Edwards  
Deming

## Help Wanted ~by LG

Staff and board of Phoenix Human Services Association are exploring whether or not a social enterprise might be a fit for our agency.

***A social enterprise can be defined as a business that produces goods or services for the marketplace, but manages its operations and redirects its surpluses in pursuit of social, cultural, or environmental goals.***

There are many reasons non-profit organizations begin social enterprise businesses. The main two reasons are:

- to gain surplus revenue to redirect into programming
- to directly serve the organization's mission through the daily business operations.

We invite all Phoenix staff, clients, board members, and other friends of the agency to complete a short (approximately 3 minute) questionnaire. You will have received a 'Survey Monkey' questionnaire by email on August 12. For those of you who don't typically communicate via e-mail, there are paper copies of the questionnaire available at the front desk and we will also make copies available for staff at Joan Crescent. The deadline for submission is August 23 so please try to get us your feedback by then. All written submissions can be dropped off at reception at Store Street and passed on to me.

After August 23<sup>rd</sup> I will compile the results and share them agency-wide in preparation for our next steps. Thank you for contributing your ideas and, of course, for your time.

## Union FAQ ~ by GK

Over the past few months, your Joint Labour Management Committee (JLM) has been discussing how to best orient new front line employees as to what it means to be a unionized employee at Phoenix. Rob and Wendy (two of your stewards on JLM) took on this challenge and created an orientation procedure for new hires (see the Union Bulletin Board at Store St. and Joan Crescent).

With the new collective agreement recently signed and a Phoenix newsletter due out, it seemed like an opportune time to share some reminders about JLM and the BCGEU that might be useful to you.

First, JLM is a mandated Committee under article 8.3 of the collective agreement. Its purpose is to review, discuss, and make recommendations related to the maintenance of good relations between front line staff and management. In so doing, there may be opportunities to correct or improve situations that might otherwise lead to misunderstandings and grievances. JLM is comprised of front line and management staff. The current members are Meghan Blackburn, Leann Finlay, Rob Hunter, and Wendy Weeks (representing labour), and George Klukowski (representing management).

The group meets approximately every 60 days and discusses issues/concerns raised by Phoenix staff and/or other issues/concerns that may have important implications for labour relations. If you have issues that fit the criteria for JLM, consider approaching one of the reps and ask to have your issue raised at the next meeting. The only issues that are excluded from these meetings are wages or any other matters of collective bargaining that are governed under labour relations legislation. Minutes of the JLM meetings are kept in a binder in the photocopy room at Store St. and are available to all staff.

As alluded to earlier, we have a new collective agreement for 2013-14. In an effort to save money, however, hard copies are no longer available to staff. Instead, staff members are encouraged to visit [www.bcgeu.ca](http://www.bcgeu.ca) for the latest updates. The latest collective agreement available online for review is the 2010-12 agreement (<http://www.bcgeu.ca/sites/default/files/Comm%20Living%20Agreement.pdf>).

I'm not sure when the 2012-14 agreement will be posted on their website but if you have any questions regarding the new agreement, I would be happy to help out as I have copies of all of the agreed-upon

changes currently in effect.

The BCGEU Staff Representative for Phoenix is Cheryl Jones. We have had a longstanding, positive, and collaborative relationship with Cheryl and the BCGEU. Should you have any concerns about your rights under the collective agreement, please feel free to contact any of the union stewards at Phoenix. If they cannot help or are unsure about how to best support you, they will consult with Cheryl Jones for direction. Below are your Phoenix shop stewards and contact information:

Robert Hunter (Family Development);  
250-995-5500, voice mail # 631  
Wendy Weeks (Mental Health Outreach);  
250-995-5500, voice mail # 627  
Elaine Vincent (Youth Services);  
250-995-5500, voice mail # 604  
Cheryl Sanders (CLS Children);  
250-995-5500, voice mail # 655  
Megan Edwards (Family Development);  
250-995-5500, voice mail # 608  
Meghan Blackburn (Adult Day Programs);  
250-727-2681

Finally, don't forget to check your Union Bulletin board from time to time for important news and updates.



## Legacy Building ~ by GK

Last month, I had a surprise visit from Andrew Morgan, former President of the Board of Directors of Child and Family Counselling Association (CAFCA). Andrew told me that CAFCA's dissolution was officially in the books and the remaining assets were being dispersed as per the Board's wishes. Some of those assets went to the University of Victoria for scholarship/bursary support for students, others to the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, and the remaining \$12,000 was presented to Phoenix and earmarked for the TO-EM fund. For those of you who may not recall, the TO-EM fund (TO-EM stands for 'The Other Eleven Months' because December was a month where charitable activities and supports were particularly prevalent but what about the other 11 months of the year) was created by the CAFCA Board of Directors, and attributed to the brilliant founding ideas of Harvey Rogalsky (CAFCA past President). The fund was established to:

- enhance the development and resilience of all clients and their parent(s) and caregiver(s) through life skills activities/training and parenting support with the intent to foster a sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-reliance for them and;
- meet unique and limited financial needs where other charitable sources are not available.

Before CAFCA closed its doors, the Board asked Phoenix to take over administration of the TO-EM fund and provided seed money to keep the fund going. The rest, as they say, is history. Now with an additional injection of capital, clients will be able to benefit from the fund for years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff at Phoenix, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Andrew and the CAFCA Board for not only their generosity but their commitment to keeping the wonderful legacy that is CAFCA alive in the community. You continue to set an example for us all to follow.

# Gerry Has Left The Building

~ by GK



He did it ... he finally did it. After close to 30 years in this field, Gerry Karagianis has taken the sign down, drawn the shades, and closed up shop on a brilliant career in child and youth care. He has been called many things over the years, some of which cannot be mentioned here. One of his own teammates has often referred to him as a "Renaissance Man" for all of the abilities, talents, and complexities that he embodies. Gerry, however, has always been a modest sort and preferred to see himself as a 'foot soldier' ...someone out there who does the doing and not the talking about the doing. I wouldn't call Gerry an anarchist per se, but had he not had to navigate and negotiate complex systems and bureaucracies for the benefit of at-risk youth, I think he may have had a go as one. What he was, though, and continues to be, is larger than life. He wants his life to matter and he lives in a way that brings that together. When you live large, you also draw people to you and if his "good-bye party" was anything to go by, he has succeeded in leaps and bounds.

On behalf of Phoenix Human Services, I want to bid Gerry a fond farewell, to thank him for his years of dedicated service to youth and families, and wish him all the very best in all his future endeavours both foreign and domestic.

Don't simply retire *from* something,  
have something to retire *to*.  
Harry Emerson Fosdick

Age is only a number, a cipher for  
the records. A man can't retire his  
experience. He must use it.  
Bernard Baruch

# Making Phoenix Bloom

~ by Donna Washington

Every morning as I pull into Joan Crescent, I thank my lucky stars. I really shudder when I think of our past digs and I am so grateful that we are here, located in this beautiful neighbourhood. But it is all those extras that make this place so welcoming. The Day Program staff members are to thank for this! They have taken the time and energy to create seasonal art for the lobby, tend to the gardens, create hanging baskets, and create planters that brighten our surroundings. Also, a big "thank you" for the donation of the glider swing that now sits outside the door at JC, as it never felt right having anyone standing outside. Last but certainly not least, a "thank you" to the staff for also taking on the responsibility for the care and maintenance of the vans. This is a very difficult task at times because you just never know when they decide to break down on us or keeping up with all the maintenance of 5 vehicles. I know I have thanked you all personally, but everyone needs to know how awesome you really are!

Wherever Phoenix  
goes, it will bloom.  
Lorraine Kahan



## Dwelling On Stressful Events Can Increase Inflammation In The Body

Dwelling on negative events can increase levels of inflammation in the body, a new Ohio University study finds. Researchers discovered that when study participants were asked to ruminate on a stressful incident, their levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of tissue inflammation, rose. The study is the first time to directly measure this effect in the body.

The study showed that in those people who focused on a stressful event, the levels of the inflammatory marker continued to rise for at least one hour. Compared to people who thought of more relaxing events, the marker returned to starting levels.

More and more, chronic inflammation is being associated with various disorders and conditions. The immune system plays an important role in various cardiovascular disorders such as heart disease, as well as cancer, dementia, and autoimmune diseases.

***So you really are what you think! To help yourself heal, focus on positive thoughts daily.***

(source article can be found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/03/130313182255.htm>)



### Graceful Solutions ~ by G.K.

Former Phoenix staff Grace Gerry, who is currently running Graceful Solutions (a local counselling practice), has offered to come to Phoenix to give a complementary, no obligation one hour 'lunch and learn' on strategies for dealing with stress. To give you an idea of the kinds of things Grace could cover, here is a tip sheet she used while addressing a group of business women at the Union Club. Have a look and consider asking her to come to present to your teams or even to the larger agency.

#### **EMOTIONAL FIRST AID STRESS KIT**

**Pay attention to this moment. Be present.** This stops stress from zoning you out. Notice your feet on the floor, your bum on the seat, the air temperature, the smells, shapes, colours, and the texture of things. Most people spend very little time in the present, but this is the only moment that matters. As Ram Dass says, "Be, Here, Now".

**Pay attention to what is going well and be pleased with yourself.** Often stress makes us lose sight of the whole picture and zero in on what is not going right. No matter how bad your day is, there are always things going well, even small things. Another way is to notice what you are grateful for. Shift your attention, change the channel and you will feel better. And be pleased with yourself. You have always done your best, and deserve kindness and compassion.

**Get in close with friends and be honest about needing their help.** Most of us are reluctant to ask for help, but we miss out on feeling understood when we are honest about our struggles. That is a gift we all deserve. And asking for help gives someone else a gift because they feel trusted and complimented to be asked for help.

**Tell the stories of experiences that are important to you,** to someone you trust, and don't be afraid of your emotions. Tears and laughter are healing. There is an old saying "a trouble shared is a trouble halved". Talking through problems helps you feel better and helps to clear your mind.

**Learn to listen well and take turns:** take turns and time it, clear your mind, focus on the other person, listen with attention, remind them of their strengths, allow them to cry, avoid problem solving, relax and know that listening is the best gift you can give.

**Call Grace Gerry, Counsellor today 250.370-2254** for more information and a complimentary 20 min phone consult. [grace@gracefulsolutions.ca](mailto:grace@gracefulsolutions.ca) [www.gracefulsolutions.ca](http://www.gracefulsolutions.ca)



*Phoenix  
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*The opinions expressed by those interviewed or those contributing are not necessarily those of Phoenix Human Services Association or its management.*

# How is Your Soul These Days?

~ by Robert Dunn

Plenty has been written throughout the ages regarding the soul, the heart, and the spirit. However, these writings often seem to be focused on the search outside of ourselves, a search that invariably leads away from ourselves such as “finding our soul mate”, “two hearts beat as one”, “our spirits collide”, and so on and so forth.

The late and great psychologist, James Hillman, wrote an interesting book on the inner search for our own soul and its power to determine our lives. In 'The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling', Hillman attempts to address the core of being and mine the depths of the psyche. The acorn that grows into an oak tree describes the fundamental premise of what Hillman feels is embodied in each and every one of us.

Plato and the Greek philosophers suggested that the soul descends in four modes.

- First, the body grows downward, sagging with the weight of gravity as a result of ageing.
- Second, accepting to be one among your people and a member of the larger human family tree, including its twisted and rotted branches.
- Third, living in a place that serves your soul and ties you down with duties and customs.
- Lastly, giving back what life's circumstances gave you by means of gestures that declare your full attachment to the world.

Citing examples from mythology, Hillman suggests that we allow mystery, poetry, and uncertainty to counteract the hard science and “sexy” technology that currently dominates our western culture. Metaphor calls us to use imagination in the inner search for soul. The soul yearns for beauty, whether it is through nature, art, music, or literature. We can then apply that in our intuitions with others who cross our path in daily life. Personal insight gives us the ability to see the “acorn” in the people around us. We can recognize and value genuine beauty as a result. Our own little idiosyncratic behaviours remind us that we are all human. We need to laugh at ourselves because we are so “unique”.

“...genius can be bounded in a nutshell and yet embrace the whole fullness of life.” Thomas Mann

Be it genius, calling, or character, it is part of the path towards our destiny. The great teachers simply say “pay attention” along that road. The subtle clues will lead you to crack the code. The inner journey beckons us to connect with our soul. With what or with whom remains to be determined. For many, it is a real live soul mate but for some, it is the journey itself.



# Mindfully Meeting

~ by Lorraine Kahan

It occurred to me the other day that my life is full of meetings. Most parts of each one of my days, even my days off, are loaded with meetings or appointments scheduled with other people. I have meetings with colleagues, clients, doctors, social workers, community service people, family, friends. . . sometimes I am so overwhelmed by the amount of places I have to be and people I have to see (especially when I write it all down like this)!

And sometimes I feel resentful. I'm sure you can relate.

My feelings and perceptions about this subject stem from some meetings I've been to at our agency which were poorly attended. I believe it reflects badly on our agency as a whole when we do not give our best at meetings. It made me reflect on my own meeting etiquette. I believe we can all benefit from some introspection on the subject.

So I reflect on the times I have arrived disrespectfully late. I think about the times I am ungracious by not being attentive: filed my nails, sent a text message, rolled my eyes, spoke to the person next to me instead of listening (ugh). I think about the times when I take others for granted, when I forget to do what I promised, or (yikes!) forget to bring the treats I promised (ugh). I think about the times that I arrive churlish, my bad attitude bleeding into my conversation and not considering the feelings of everyone else in the meeting. I take a phone call instead of turning it off and calling back later (they can leave a message). I think about being preoccupied in my thoughts and ignoring what others are saying, worrying about my next meeting, escaping to a patio far, far away with a beer in hand...

And yet...I feel honoured to be included in the lives of so many people, privileged to be able to participate in so many events, grateful to receive so many services, appreciative of all that is available in my community, humbled my skills are needed, and obliged to share that which I possess to help others.

I am an important part of each and every meeting I am expected to attend.

We can all admit to it. We are all busy and inundated but we still need to follow the golden rule and give others the respect they deserve and we would like for ourselves. Let's take time to reflect on our own meeting etiquette and make a decision to:

- Show up on time
- Prepare ahead (especially if you are leading)
- Turn off cell phones
- Leave personal issues at home
- Engage with interest and active listening
- Pay attention (have empathy for the speaker)
- Stick to the agenda
- Practice integrity (doing the right thing even when no one is watching)
- Be confidential
- Be mindful that we each represent our agency
- Encourage others when given the opportunity
- Stay for the whole meeting
- Practice gratitude

For me, I will listen, validate, appreciate, participate, and even cherish the fact that my life has meaning and purpose. . . and sometimes I'll even bring treats!

## The Gift ~ by GK

In late spring, as students were racing for the doors in anticipation of summer, I had the pleasure of attending the Camosun College Community Support Educational Assistant Awards Ceremony. This year, Camosun CSEA graduate Rebecca Lanyon was the honoured recipient of Phoenix's James Guthrie Memorial Award.

By the end of the ceremony, it was clear to me that Rebecca was a superstar in the making. She was a key person in the development of the video that was featured to cap off the ceremony entitled "The Gifts We Bring". The video featured persons with disabilities articulating and demonstrating the 'gifts that they bring' to the rich tapestry of human life. It was both poignant and extremely moving. Rebecca was also presented with a bouquet of flowers and recognized by both her peers and teachers as an outstanding individual and student. At the end of the ceremony, I felt particularly honoured to know that in some small way, Phoenix was able to recognize and support a person of such depth and character. So being a celebrity-junkie, and with an edition of "Phoenix Rising" on the horizon, I invited Rebecca to come down to the agency for an interview and, unlike Kate Middleton who bowed out ostensibly because of something to do with a birth, Rebecca graciously accepted.

Rebecca described her program at Camosun as "absolutely amazing". She got so much out of it and was particularly thankful to her teachers, especially Mary Harber and Jennifer Neely, both of whom were not only uber-supportive but also created the space for her creativity to shine forth.

Rebecca's road to Camosun was anything but smooth as she has long struggled with her own learning disabilities. She is no stranger to stigma and shame and for that reason she feels a particular resonance for persons with disabilities. During her practicum placement with Inclusion Works (an organization run by a dedicated group of parents), she learned from the persons she was supporting about "living in the moment". She found the people she met to be wonderful and welcoming to her and was excited to learn they were able to draw out the best in her and to teach her things about herself even she didn't know.

Often times, young people struggle to find their stride, to discover that vocation that will nourish their hopes and dreams. For Rebecca, she has long known she was destined for the helping profession. Her family recognized this early on and has been encouraging her ever since. Rebecca studied American Sign Language at Royal Roads University for about a year and did a certificate in Emergency Medical Response with the hope of becoming a paramedic. Unfortunately, a freak accident while volunteering as an umpire resulted in a shoulder injury that required surgery. The shoulder never regained its full strength and as a result, she opted not to pursue paramedical work. Nursing became another option of interest but with a 2 to 3 year waitlist and a significant amount of upgrading ahead, this proved to be too onerous for the young superstar.

One day, while thumbing through Camosun's program guide, she stumbled across the CSEA program and with her family's blessing and support, she enrolled. The rest, as they say, is history.

So what's next for the heroine of this tale? Rebecca got a job offer for a position as an Educational Assistant (EA) from School District #61 the microsecond she finished her first practicum placement at Spectrum Community School. The cool part of this story is that she chose Spectrum because the EA that supported her as a young person at Cedar Hill was the very person who was going to mentor her at Spectrum. Talk about coming full circle. Rebecca also hopes to do some volunteer work in the community as well as work part-time at the jewelry store where she has been for the past six years. If that wasn't enough, she and her fiancé, Nicki, are hoping to tie the knot at some point in the near future.

On behalf of the Board and staff of Phoenix Human Services, I want to wish Rebecca all the very best for what looks to me like a very bright future. It was our honour to honour her, for she is a gift to the community and one that will make a big difference to persons in need.



Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.  
Theodore Roosevelt



Let  
perseverance  
be your engine  
and hope your  
fuel.  
H. Jackson  
Brown Jr.



Wisdom is the  
reward you get  
for a lifetime of  
listening when  
you'd have  
preferred to talk.  
Doug Larson

## Aging In Canada And How I Became A "Senior" One Afternoon

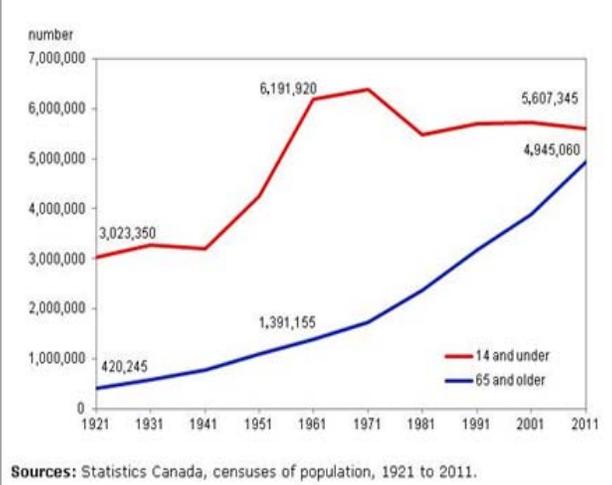
Well, it finally happened...and when I least expected it. Last week while speaking to a group at the Harrison Hot Springs resort, I decided to go early in the day to play a round of golf at a course nearby. As I made my way to the counter of the pro shop to see if there was room for a single player, the young woman asked, "senior?" I replied "Really?!?" And although I wasn't rude in the way I said it, she clued in that her desire to save me \$15 with the senior's rate, might not be going over very well.

Not only did she stumble over herself to explain her great intentions, but another fellow behind the counter, a little older and I'm guessing a lot wiser, recognized that not everyone is happy to get the dollar savings if the price to be paid is being called a "senior". And by rights, I guess I can't get too concerned since this course gives a seniors rate at the ripe old age of 55 and next February I'll be 54. It's just that I get so many comments from people thinking I look younger (Note to self: check for tell-tale signs of lying when people tell me how young I look).

Well, I better get used to it, and from what I see coming out of Statistics Canada, there are a lot of others who are also getting used to it. While Stats Canada released information about families this week, back in May, they gave us a snap shot of the age of Canadians from the 2011 census. One of the quotes got my attention:

"In 2011, census data showed for the first time that there were more people aged 55 to 64, typically the age group where people leave the labour force, than aged 15 to 24, typically the age group where people enter it."

They also noted that while the number of seniors aged 65 and over increased 14.1%, the number of children aged 14 and under increased only 0.5%. Therefore, as you can see from the chart below, it won't be long before the number of Canadian seniors overtakes the number of youngins'.



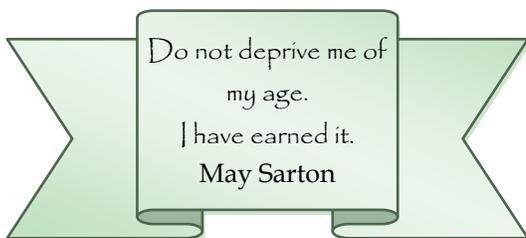
We don't seem to realize exactly how much our aging population is driving change in this country. For example:

- With more people leaving the workforce than entering it, this means all our net employment growth comes from immigration (not in the future. Now).
- Since most immigrants coming to this country tend not to look like me, or went to the same religious institutions I did, Canadians will have to find ways to accommodate different practises, even more than we do today.
- The fastest growing religious population in Canada is Muslims, yet in a 2010 poll, 55% of Canadians answered "no" when asked if "Muslims share our values." We've got to reconcile this to avoid the horrible job many European countries are doing, not integrating Muslim immigrants and not giving them equal opportunities.
- Now that mandatory retirement is pretty much a thing of the past (federal legislation ends that practise in December), employers (and co-workers) will have to find ways of working with older workers who want to continue working. Do you now get rid of someone if they "slow down"? Or if someone does "slow down", do you need to accommodate them, since age is a protected ground of discrimination?
- How are we going to pay for increased health care which comes with an aging population when so many of us believe the politicians who want to cut our taxes even more? We can't have it both ways and we'll have to decide what to do.

Look, I get that my opening comments suggest perhaps I'm not aging gracefully. But I had no crisis when I turned 40 or 50, so there's hope for me. It just took me by surprise. Now if you wonder if I said anything when she gave me the \$15 discount as a senior...I'll let you decide for yourself...

Happy aging everyone!  
Stephen

Stephen Hammond, B.A., LL.B., CSP, is a lawyer-turned professional speaker. He's written two books, [Managing Human Rights at Work: 101 practical tips to prevent human rights disasters](#) and [Steps in the Rights Direction: 365 human rights celebrations and tragedies that inspired Canada and the world](#). Both can be purchased on his website [www.StephenHammond.ca](http://www.StephenHammond.ca)



Age is an issue of mind over matter.  
If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.  
Mark Twain