



CONTINUITY NEWS



Helping families in Manitoba plan a safer and more secure future for their family member with an intellectual disability



March 2009

barrier-free MANITOBA

Continuity Care Supports Barrier-Free Manitoba

Every day, 170,000 Manitobans with disabilities face a multitude of barriers that limit their enjoyment of many basic life activities that others take for granted.

Barrier-Free Manitoba is a non-partisan, non-profit, cross-disability initiative led by a Steering Committee with members spanning Manitoba's disability community. They have launched a campaign calling for the Province of Manitoba to enact strong and effective legislation that requires the removal of existing barriers and prevents the creation of new ones.

Barrier-Free Manitoba believes that:

- Enacting such legislation is a basic matter of human rights.
- The removal of barriers is an entirely realistic and attainable duty.
- The removal of barriers is good and basic public policy that will benefit everyone.
- Enacting such legislation is about doing what is right and doing what is reasonable.

Barrier-Free Manitoba welcomes endorsement for accessibility-rights legislation from coalitions, agencies, organizations and individuals. Check their website if you want to help make meaningful and enduring improvements in the lives of Manitobans with disabilities.

www.barrierfreemb.com

From the Office

It's been a long, cold winter and we are all looking forward to Spring. Liz and I have not been hibernating here at Continuity Care. On the contrary, it has been a busy winter with our workshops, support groups and continuing to meet with families on an individual basis as needed. We are pleased to be able to respond to your phone calls and emails and have noticed an increase in inquiries specific to the new RDSP. We have also seen an increase in memberships this past year and would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members.

Our Board members have also been busy attending our monthly board meetings, reviewing our Strategic Plan, finalizing the budget for 2009-2010 and participating on the various Committees. If you or someone you know has an interest in joining the Continuity Care Board or would like to join our Fundraising or Family Advisory Committee, please contact our office.

With Spring comes a sense of new found energy and excitement for what lies ahead.



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IT'S TAX TIME AGAIN!

What's New for Your 2008 Tax Return

Medical expenses

Under proposed changes, new eligible medical expenses include amounts paid to purchase, operate, and maintain the following devices if prescribed by a medical practitioner:



- Altered auditory feedback devices for the treatment of a speech disorder
- Electrotherapy devices for the treatment of a medical condition or a severe mobility impairment
- Standing devices for standing therapy in the treatment of a severe mobility impairment
- Pressure pulse therapy devices for the treatment of a balance disorder

You can also claim amounts paid to purchase, care for and maintain a service animal specially trained to assist an individual who is severely affected by autism or epilepsy.

Reasonable travel expenses incurred for the individual to attend a school, institution or other place that trains the individual in the handling of the service animal are also eligible.

See Guide RC4064, *Medical and Disability- Related information for more details*

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4064/rc4064-08e.pdf>

Have you claimed?



Line 365 – Children's fitness amount

You can claim to a maximum of \$500 per child, the fees paid in 2008 that relate to the cost of registering your child in a prescribed program of physical activity. The child must have been under 16 years of age at the beginning of the year.

Children with disabilities – If the child qualifies for the disability amount and is under 18 years of age at the beginning of the year, an additional amount of \$500 can be claimed provided that a minimum of \$100 is paid on registration or membership fees for a prescribed program of physical activity.

Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSA)

What is a TFSA?

Starting in 2009, a tax-free savings account (TFSA) is a new way for Canadians to set aside money tax-free. Contributions made to a TFSA are not deductible for income tax purposes and the income earned in the account is tax free, even when it is withdrawn.

Who is eligible?

Any individual who is 18 years old, a resident of Canada, and who has a valid social insurance number (SIN) can establish a TFSA.



Is there a contribution limit?

For 2009, you can contribute up to a maximum of \$5,000 into your TFSA. After 2009, your annual contribution limit will be \$5,000 plus indexation if applicable.

As the account holder, you are the only person who can contribute to your TFSA.

Types of investments allowed in a TFSA

The types of investments that will be permitted in a TFSA would include mutual funds, securities listed on a designated stock exchange, GIC's, bonds, and certain shares of small business corporations.

For more information please visit CRA at <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdlst/tpcs/tfsa-celi/menu-eng.html> or speak with a representative from your financial institution

QUICK REFERENCE

Line 214	Child care expenses
Line 215	Disability supports deduction
Line 232	Other deductions
Line 305	Amount for eligible dependant
Line 306	Amount for infirm dependants age 18 or older
Line 315	Caregiver amount
Line 316	Disability amount (for self)
Line 318	Disability amount transferred from your spouse or common-law partner
Line 323	Tuition, education and textbook amounts
Line 326	Amounts transferred from your spouse or common-law partner
Line 330	Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 1990 or later
Line 331	Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependants
Line 365	Children's fitness amount
Line 452	Refundable medical expense supplement
Line 453	Working income tax benefit (WITB)

RDSP updates

Currently BC, Alberta, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, NWT and Yukon have exempted the RDSP as an asset and/or income. Quebec and New Brunswick have exempted the RDSP as an asset but are capping the amount of income that you are allowed to withdraw from the plan. Prince Edward Island has announced that they will exempt the RDSP as an asset and income up until the low income threshold and Nunavut has currently not indicated how they will treat the RDSP.

On December 22, 2008, BMO announced that they would be offering the RDSP. They were the first of the national banks to be ready. Customers can apply for a BMO RDSP through BMO Investment Centre at 1-800-665-7700.

On December 23, 2008, the federal government announced that they would be extending the deadline for 2008 contributions to March 2, 2009.

The Royal Bank has also announced that they will be offering the RDSP starting February 16th, 2009. Those who wish to make an application can contact RBC at 1-800-463-3863 or contact your local branch.

In Manitoba, the organizations that have been a part of the RDSP Coalition have worked together to create a RDSP pamphlet and an educational DVD that are now available for distribution and circulation to those who are interested. Funding for these resources has been provided by the Province of Manitoba – Family Services and Housing. We would also like to recognize the hard work and time of Gary, Doug and others at the Independent Living Resource Centre for the production of the DVD. We have some copies of the pamphlet available at our office. If you would like to order multiple copies of the pamphlet or the DVD to share with others who might benefit from the information, please contact Community Living Manitoba at 786-1607.

Charitable Donations

If you are considering making a donation to a charitable organization this year, please think of Continuity Care. New gifts to Continuity Care's Endowment Fund that is managed by The Winnipeg Foundation will help our fund to grow and offset any losses due to the downturn in the financial markets. Donations can also be made directly to Continuity Care and will be directed to operating expenses, which assist us in continuing to provide our programs and services to our members. Tax receipts will be issued. If you would like more information about ways you can contribute, please contact our office at 779-1679.



Cerebral Palsy Association
Celebrates

**The 20th Anniversary
of the Stationary Bike Race**
Winnipeg- March 14th, 2009
Brandon – March 21st, 2009

For more information contact
bikerace@cerebralpalsy.mb.ca
or phone (204) 982-4842



Please note that if you are visiting our offices at 120 Maryland for meetings or workshops, we are no longer able to park in the Food Fare parking lot. Parking is available behind the building in the evenings, on the adjacent side street Purcell or on Maryland (except between 3:30 – 5:30) If assistance is required please call us in advance to make arrangements.

Are These Groups For You?

Senior Parent to Parent is a support and information group for older parents, as well as siblings, who have a child or brother/sister with a disability. You don't have to be senior citizen to join this group, but we do tend to focus on caregivers who are aging and the issues pertaining to this stage of life. Their family member with a disability may also be aging, may be living in the family home or have moved into a home of their own. The focus is on intellectual disabilities, but we have parents who attend that have children with other types of disabilities (for example, a psychiatric diagnosis) and find that some of the issues, questions and planning needs are similar and feel the group is a good fit for them.

The groups are an opportunity to meet and connect with other parents and siblings. It is a chance to share experiences, feelings and resources with each other and you may also find it comforting to know that you are not alone. Others may have the same questions and feelings that have been on your mind. We often invite guest speakers to come and present on topics that are identified by the group. As well, the coffee is always hot and we have some cookies or snacks to enjoy during our meetings.

There are two groups/locations for Senior Parent to Parent. Both groups meet from 10:00am – 12:00pm (Sept to June)

1. **Access River East – 975 Henderson Highway**
(1st Thursday of each month)
→ *Next Meeting – Thursday March 5th, 2009*
2. **120 Maryland Street**
(3rd Thursday of each month)
→ *Next Meeting – Thursday March 19th, 2009*

For the months of June and December the two groups get together for a potluck gathering with a focus on food, fun and friendships.

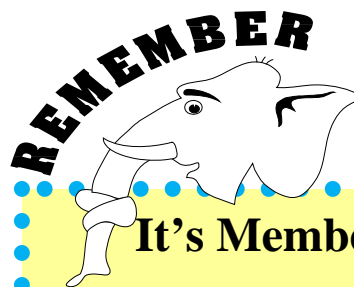
Transitions Parent Group is a support and information group for parents whose children are now young adults and are in the process of transition. The transition could be related to graduation from school and exploring employment or daytime activities for this next stage of their lives or it could be related to moving from their family home into a home of their own. In either case, this group will bring parents together to share their experiences and provide resources to assist in the planning for these transitions.

We invite guest speakers to present on topics related to this age and stage that are identified by the group. The group is an opportunity to connect with other parents and also learn about what is available in Winnipeg and in our province for services and resources.

This group meets at 120 Maryland on the first Monday of each month (October to June) from 7:00-9:00pm.

→ *Next meeting – Monday March 2nd, 2009*

We invite you to come and check out either of these groups to see if they are a good fit for you. Both groups are always open to new members. If you are interested in joining or have questions, please call Suzanne at 779-1679.



It's Membership Time!

Don't forget to renew your membership with Continuity Care Inc.

1 Year Family Membership \$20
Lifetime Family Membership \$250

With your membership enjoy free workshops during the year, voting privileges at AGM, one to one planning and a copy of The Circle of Life workbook.

(see attachment or insert for membership form)

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