



A Trip Around Canada!

Our Canadian content newsletter looks a bit different this time! The editorial team has been busily working behind the scenes to develop a new direction for this newsletter and we are so very excited to unveil it here for you!

The conversation around change was a direct result of the pandemic when forms of communication started to shift and change dramatically. Out of the feelings of intense isolation and loss, God revealed the need to establish deeper connections and build authentic community in new ways.

One way we are aiming to foster these deeper connections and create authentic community is by having every edition of this newsletter focus on a different Canadian classis and introduce you to its regional advocate.

We are delighted to have this edition feature Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan and highlight the work of their regional advocate, Cara Milne. Cara has worked tirelessly for disability advocacy and awareness for many years and is an incredible blessing to the Disability Concerns ministry and our denomination as a whole. We know you'll love getting to know her better and hearing about her work and books!

We look forward to travelling around the country with you in coming newsletters, getting to know each other more and continuing to all be part of this amazing Disability Concerns community.

—Jenna Hoff, Editor

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT ISSUE: SUMMER 2021

Our next issue will focus on Classis BC North-West. Regional Advocate Caroline Short will share about her work in this part of Canada and what makes it unique!



CONNECTING WITH OUR REGIONAL ADVOCATES

Introducing Cara Milne

Cara Milne lives in Calgary, AB and is the Regional Advocate of the Alberta South and Saskatchewan Classis. A proud member of River Park Church, she is passionate about community building and helping all people, including people with disabilities, to be active members of their faith communities. Cara became part of the Disability Concerns Ministry about 10 years ago but has worked in the disability field her entire career. She teaches post-secondary students in a Disability Studies Diploma and has had her own training company called M-Powered Planning for almost 20 years. Cara travels all over Canada teaching organizations, churches, and schools how to build communities for people with disabilities. She has written two books on the subject which you can check out on her website.

Cara has always felt that the Disability Concerns Ministry is respected within her classis. She sees a willingness from all the churches to learn and create atmospheres that are accessible. However, she often wishes she was busier. "I wish churches would use me more," she says. "I see churches interested but unsure where to start. I am here for them!"

Not sure where to start? Cara recommends supporting people with disabilities to serve, rather than 'be served'. Everyone has something to offer—big or small. Also, look around to see if your space is even accessible for people to come in! Lastly, she recommends beginning by getting to know the adults with disabilities that you have already in your community or their families. What do they really need? Make sure their voices are being heard.

Cara currently serves on both the Executive Team of Disability Concerns Canada and the CRC/RCA Disability Concerns advisory team, and we love the energy, ideas, and enthusiasm she brings so that everyone can belong and everyone can serve.



DISABILITY CONCERNS MINISTRY UPDATE

Launching the Newest Resource for Supporting People with Disabilities in Faith Communities

Disability Concerns Canada is excited to announce our annual training event for 2021. Last year, in the very middle of the pandemic, we shifted our conference that typically takes place in the spring, in person, in Ontario to an online learning series in October. This change allowed for people across Canada and the States to join us via zoom. While we are still navigating this pandemic, Disability Concerns has chosen to repeat the experience for 2021!

[Join us](#) every Thursday evening in October at 8pm - 9pm Eastern for:

Everybody Belongs, Serving Together: Launching the Newest Resource for Supporting People with Disabilities in Faith Communities

The Disability Concerns Ministry is excited to announce that we are launching our 3rd edition of the Inclusion Handbook which will now be titled: Everybody Belongs, Serving Together. Church and Regional Advocates will be receiving their print edition in the mail within the next few months. It will be available by early June. What better way

to introduce our community to the content of this newly updated handbook than by hosting a series where you get to meet the authors and hear from people working and supporting our community?!

Our speaker line up includes:

Mark Stephenson, Director of Disability Concerns Ministry, CRCNA

Cara Milne, Regional Advocate, Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan, Author, trainer and consultant.

Bethany McKinney Fox, Pastor - Beloved Everybody Church, Speaker, Writer, Coach

Dan Vander Plaats, Director of Advancement, Elim Christian Services

Keith Dow, Manager of Organizational and Spiritual Life, Christian Horizons, Contributor for The Disability and Faith Forum

Chantal Huinink, Coordinator, Organizational & Spiritual Life, Christian Horizons, Contributor for The Disability and Faith Forum

Exciting, right?! Make sure to save the dates in your calendar!

We will be releasing more details about the series as well as how to register for this event over the next few weeks. Updated information on how to join us will be posted on the Network, on Facebook, on Instagram and in our DC Canada monthly newsletters!

Looking forward to having you join our online series this October!

Please note: Whether you live in Canada or in the United States, please join us online for this event.



LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK? WE HAVE THE ANSWER!

Noticed, Known and Missed by Cara Milne

If you have ever wanted information on how to relate to people with developmental disabilities, this is the book you should read! Cara was an “accidental” student within the Community Rehabilitation Degree program while in university, and it was here that she acquired her lifelong interest and passion for improving the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities. Throughout the book Cara addresses families, staff and support teams on how to support people with disabilities to build purpose and connection. Relationships enable us to get to know the person rather than focus on their disabilities. This is where the title of the book comes from; when we develop a connection with others, and are a part of the community, we are noticed, known and missed! The information in this book is valuable for everyone when establishing relationships with anyone, not just those with disabilities.

Many persons with developmental disabilities require encouragement and assistance to relate to persons not known to them. She stresses several important features regarding communication with a person with a disability: it must be person-centred rather than disability-centred, it must be authentic, and it must enable the person to identify his/her role within the community. Her writing is punctuated with numerous stories to illustrate what she is talking about. Chapter 5 is a treasure chest of strategies that anyone can use to ensure that connections are real, genuine, and lasting.

This is an easy read (I did it in one afternoon), and you will be blessed with a wealth of valuable information on how to relate, support and encourage a person with disabilities to have the best quality of life possible. In fact, it can help all of us to establish meaningful relationships with the strangers we meet.

Pick up your copy of Noticed, Known, Missed from [Cara's website](#).



REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST YEAR

What We Have Gained

There will be stories told about the many losses and changes from COVID-19. However, there have been some things gained. One obvious thing to me has been how online meetings and church services have created the possibility to include people who were often excluded.

A friend of mine is an amazing mom and wife. She is a writer and disability activist, and also happens to have mobility issues. Typically, we are both invited to an international conference every year, the annual Disability Concerns Leadership Training. She has never been able to attend because of the complications of flying with a power wheelchair. This year, the conference was hosted via Zoom—for the first time in all these years, she was able to attend.

I am hearing from families who are attending church for the first time in years because it is online. My own church in Calgary has been offering Zoom Church for the past year. This has allowed people to attend who normally could not—even from a hospital bed. Our missionaries all over the world have been able to join us Sunday mornings for the first time ever. We have had people join from a hospital bed, or while camping and traveling. Technology is not perfect – and there have been lots of blips along the way – but we are worshiping and learning together online the best way we can. It matters!

My church is now hosting both an in-person service and a Zoom service. It is all happening at the same time, and we are realizing the importance of keeping both. The key to success will be to keep connecting with those people online who are not able to come in person. Community is online too!

My one encouragement is to take note of what is working better than it was before and protect that. Let us not lose the little things we have gained. Who is being included now that was not before? How can we protect this as we shift back to more in-person events? I am thankful for our learning journey as I think about our imperfect, and genuine Zoom Church services. It matches our messy, real and loving community!

Cara Milne – proud member of River Park Church in Calgary and Disability Concerns Advocate.

Find out more about Cara's work at [her website](#).



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!

Did you know we have joined Instagram?

Disability Concerns is excited to announce that we are now on Instagram! Our handle is @dis_ability_concerns. Like us and follow us on Instagram today! [Follow Us on Instagram](#)

DONATE NOW

Thank You for Your Support!

Without monetary support for Disability Concerns, we wouldn't be able to share these stories. To help us make sure that "everybody belongs, everybody serves," would you please consider praying for us and making a financial contribution? It's quick, it's easy, and it's a gracious and beautiful act of obedience.

You can donate to the ongoing work of Disability Concerns at the CRCNA here.

[Donate via the CRCNA](#)

You can donate to the ongoing work of Disability Concerns at the RCA here.

[Donate via the RCA](#)

HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

Connect to a Regional Advocate

You can find out more about our regional advocates on our website: crcna.org/Disability

Click on the drop down menu: Advocates Corner. A full contact list of regional advocates is available on this page.