

ANNUAL REPORT 2009 – 2010



Neil  
**SQUIRE**  
SOCIETY

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we look back on the 25th year of the Neil Squire Society, we are proud of our accomplishments and the many strides we have taken to help ensure Canadians with disabilities are able to achieve social, educational, political, technological, and financial equality.

Our 25th anniversary celebration took place on December 3rd, 2009. It was a huge success with over 150 clients, supporters, and friends of the Society joining us at our Burnaby office to help us celebrate this remarkable milestone. On behalf of the Senate of Canada, congratulations were extended to the society by the Honourable Yonah Martin [in a letter that was read aloud](#) at the ceremony.



Clay Braziller  
Chair

In 2009, we focused on three areas: increasing community awareness of the Society via social media, using innovation to deliver our services to greater numbers of people, and advocacy.

In our ongoing effort to reach greater numbers of Canadians with disabilities, we have made great strides towards expanding public awareness of our work by increasing our online presence. 2009 saw us venture into the world of social media with new [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#) pages. It also was the year we began development on our new website, which integrates three blogs and is integrated with our social media channels. The website has been designed to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) standards of usability, ensuring that all persons with disabilities can access it.

This year also saw the integration of a new distance learning delivery platform, enabling us to deliver our Employ-Ability program on a truly national scale. For 2010, we plan to begin using this model to deliver our Computer Comfort program and as a platform to solve the distance education challenges of other communities



Gary Birch  
Executive Director

Advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities continues to be an important part of our work. We continue to work closely with the CRTC, industry and other community-based organizations to develop a funding model to ensure that Canadians with disabilities can achieve and maintain full access to telecommunication and broadcast technologies.

It was a landmark year, not only for the Neil Squire Society, but for all Canadians with disabilities, as the Government of Canada ratified the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities at the United Nations. This pledge should protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

We continue to be driven by the hopes, wants, needs, and dreams of people with disabilities, and we look forward to another wonderful 25 years!

“It was a landmark year, not only for the Neil Squire Society, but for all Canadians with disabilities.”



She is truly making a difference in her community.



“What I have learned so far is just amazing.”

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

When Susan, who has Spina Bifida as well as diabetes, came through the doors of our Burnaby office, she had been out of the work force for some time and didn't know how to get back in.

She joined the Employ-Ability Program and was diligent with her work, soaking up as much information as she possibly could. She asked questions about the resources she could make use of, and worked hard to improve her skills in order to become as marketable as possible.

Susan was often exposed to people in her neighbourhood with high needs and she really wanted to reach out to them and make a difference. With this in mind, Susan decided to volunteer as a Peer Counselor in a diabetes program after graduation.

As a volunteer, she assists people living with limited financial means, helping them to eat properly and manage their diabetes. She loves what she is doing and she is truly making a difference in her community. Susan plans to build her skills in this volunteer role before moving forward with a paid employment plan.

## ZINAAT LEARNS AT HER OWN PACE

Zinaat once considered herself to be computer illiterate. Lack of hand mobility due to arthritis, as well as bursitis of the shoulder, made using a computer a fairly daunting task for her. That was until an acquaintance, Program Manager Yasmin Juma, told her about the Computer Comfort Program at the Neil Squire Society.

The Computer Comfort Program allows participants to work one-on-one with a volunteer tutor at their own pace and on their own goals. After one year in the program, Zinaat has become a confident computer user and she is thrilled with the progress she has made.

“What I have learned so far is just amazing. It's phenomenal what I have come out [of the program] with. Dan, my instructor right now, is just fantastic and the training from Munesh, Joe and Paul has been so encouraging as well,” she says.

Zinaat is currently learning how to use the speech recognition software Dragon NaturallySpeaking®, a program which helps her use a computer by using her voice instead of a keyboard. She is also learning how to use PowerPoint which she intends to start using soon to present slideshows in her community.

Now that Zinaat has the fundamentals, she is looking forward to learning everything that Dan can teach her. When asked about her experience at the Neil Squire Society, Zinaat had this to say: “I think I am so privileged. I am ever so grateful to you all for giving me this opportunity to be here, to come here and learn at my pace. I think that has helped me a tremendous amount.”

## STACEY RECEIVES A BOOST IN CONFIDENCE

Stacey, who has epilepsy, was referred to the Neil Squire Society and was quickly accepted into the Employ-Ability Program in Saskatchewan.

Stacey's favourite thing about the course was the comfort she felt with her instructors. "They are all so patient and kind, and the students were also great in this program. I have made some good friends."

Stacey was particularly interested in the career development module of the program. "The subjects were so interesting and educational," said Stacey. She learned a number of things in the program that helped her to achieve her employment goal, one of the most crucial being how to create a professional resume and cover letter.

Just before the program ended, Stacey secured a position as a Nurse's Aide. "I feel like everybody else out there who is going to work. Plus, my job requires me to wear scrubs so I feel really good about myself."

"When I started this program I didn't think much of myself because of my disability," said Stacey. "Now I have a job and it boosts my confidence. I have grown to be kind to myself."

Next, Stacey plans to take her General Educational Development (GED) with the Neil Squire Society and get her high school diploma.

## MARY GETS HER "OOMPH" BACK

Down on her luck one day last January, Mary was looking through the phone book, trying to find a place to rescue her from an on again-off again work history. She came across the Neil Squire Society and placed a call to the Regina, Saskatchewan office. "A very pleasant receptionist explained their Employ-Ability program to me and my ears perked up," explains Mary. "She told me they recognize fibromyalgia as an impairment to employment combined with the other concerns I had regarding being out of work for a while."

"I was at my wit's end of where to go to get my oomph back" says Mary, who mustered the courage to go in for an interview. "My interpersonal skills were rusty, not to mention my self-confidence". She started the Employ-Ability program in March, 2009.

The staff in Regina were diligent with Mary, "They would not let me be negative", and her fellow participants made her see value outside of herself, "We were all different as night and day, yet so eager to get back to work for a common good, to earn our own way in the world no matter what the barriers to overcome."

The program covered career development tactics, wellness for work awareness, the importance of having goals, as well as basic computer skills such as the internet and Microsoft® Word. Previous program participants came in to talk about their progress, "Each day I became more inspired", says Mary, "an office job was foreseeable. With previous office experience and a better outlook, my fibromyalgia and phlebitis can take a back seat."

By the end of the program, Mary felt like she knew herself better and was more equipped for her job search with an improved resume and cover letter. She managed to secure a job at SGI, a Saskatchewan insurance and licensing bureau.

"Thank you to the founders and facilitators at Neil Squire Society of Regina, Saskatchewan. You are job whisperers."



"We were all different as night and day, yet so eager to get back to work for a common good."

SASKATCHEWAN



## BRENDA DISCOVERS HER MANY SKILLS AND TALENTS

Brenda, who has multiple sclerosis, joined the Employ-Ability program at a time in her life when she was ready to make big changes; her children were grown and she was eager to find new strategies to help her gain more financial independence.

One of the impacts that multiple sclerosis has had on Brenda is that her hands quickly become exhausted. Typing is a challenge for her. While attending the Employ-Ability program at the Neil Squire Society, Brenda began using the speech recognition software, Dragon NaturallySpeaking®. The software transcribes what Brenda speaks into a microphone, freeing her hands from the tiring task of typing.

During her time in the program, Brenda discovered that she had many skills and talents, and that her true passion was to work in the counseling field coupled with spiritual guidance. Brenda said, “I decided to return to university because of the Neil Squire Society and what you did for me. You helped me realize that I have the ability to do this.”

Brenda is now pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Relations and Spirituality at Saint Paul University in Ottawa.

“Brenda did not waste time”, says Employ-Ability Facilitator, Joanne Ahern. “When she left our program she moved on with her action plan with the motivation that is required to pursue a goal. This has helped make her achievements a reality.”

## “I HAVE SKILLS THAT I NEVER KNEW I HAD”

Maureen was referred to the Neil Squire Society’s Employ-Ability program by her case worker at Ontario Works. She was seeking assistance in developing a realistic employment action plan that focused on her strengths and abilities. Maureen has mild osteoporosis and flat foot syndrome. In addition, she suffered a back injury approximately four years ago. Living with these combined conditions has impacted her ability to secure full-time employment. She cannot stand or sit for extended periods of time, or perform heavy lifting.

Maureen’s difficulty finding suitable employment persisted even though she has over 17 years of experience working in a variety of settings and has acquired many transferable skills. The Employ-Ability program was the breakthrough she needed.

Through the Employ-Ability program, she identified a wide variety of skills she acquired over the years. Maureen was enthusiastic about job prospects in the areas she identified as of high interest—working with animals in any capacity, writing, and editing.

Before long, Employ-Ability Classroom Assistant, Natalie Ducey, learned through a conversation with the owner of a local newspaper, that they were seeking an assistant. Maureen’s hard work and dedication proved successful when she was offered the position of Proofreader and Editor’s Assistant.

“The Employ-Ability program has helped me in so many ways. I found out that I have skills that I never knew I had. Everyone was very supportive, which gave me the confidence to go out and find a part time job with the newspaper. I really enjoy working as assistant to the editor. I want to thank everyone involved during the time I was in the program. If it wasn't for all of you this dream job would not have been possible”, says Maureen.

“You made me realize that I have the ability to do this.”



“If it wasn't for all of you this dream job would not have been possible.”

## A SOLID REPUTATION LEADS TO A SOLID NEW CAREER

Billy, a paper mill employee for over 30 years, suffered a serious head injury when he fell backwards off a ladder. Doctors told him he was lucky to survive, but he was left debilitated by severe headaches every day. Billy found himself 50 years old in rural New Brunswick and struggling to find suitable work.

The sparsely populated rural setting presented a few challenges for Billy. Any available jobs were entry level, labouring positions which he was no longer capable of. There was also the fact that in a community as small as Billy's, everyone knew him and knew of his accident. For most people with a disability, this could be a barrier, but Billy turned it to his advantage.

Billy turned to the Employ-Ability Program at the Neil Squire Society for help. He did not have a large bank of transferable skills to draw upon for alternate employment, but he did have a solid reputation in his community and a strong work history. He was well known and well respected. After several discussions with Billy, he singled out Robinson's Fuels as a company he thought he might like to work for. He knew the company and thought it would be a good fit.

The Neil Squire Society's Employment Specialist arranged a meeting between Billy and company owner, Kenneth Robinson and they agreed to an initial, unpaid work experience program. Billy performed such tasks as general shop maintenance, painting, pumping fuel, filling out invoices, serving customers (something Billy really enjoyed), yard work and assisting the drivers on long runs. Billy was a star. When his work experience term ended on September 2nd, he was offered a paid, part-time position with the possibility of extra work during peak times.

## A NEW REASON TO GET UP IN THE MORNING

While out walking one day, Robert was struck by a drunk driver. He sustained a serious head injury which left him unable to read or write. The 46-year-old also began having difficulty remembering directions and became disoriented easily.

When Robert came to the Neil Squire Society's Employ-Ability program in Fredericton, New Brunswick for help looking for a part time job, he didn't know what he would like to do; he "just wanted to work". With no family and no memory of past events or dates, developing a resume proved to be challenging.

Neil Squire Society staff set out to speak with employers in the downtown core, the only part of the city Robert was familiar with, to find a suitable work environment. One of the businesses they visited was The Happy Baker, a European-inspired bakery and cafe. After speaking with the general manager and explaining Robert's situation, they agreed to an interview.

Robert was accompanied by Neil Squire Society staff to the interview because of his inability to read or write, and it proved to be a success. He was hired immediately.

Robert is now working one day a week at the Happy Baker wrapping baked goods for transport. He says that he enjoys what he is doing and it gives him a new reason to get up in the morning.

After visiting Robert at his workplace and watching him with his co-workers, it is easy to see he is thriving in his new job!



When his work experience term ended, he was offered a paid, part time position.



“Not since the inclusion of disability in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms have Canadians with disabilities seen such substantive attention given to the rights of persons with disabilities.”

NEWS

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA RATIFIES CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

On March 11th, 2010 Canada pledged to be governed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international human rights instrument of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention are required to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, and to ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

“Not since the inclusion of disability in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms have Canadians with disabilities seen such substantive attention given to the rights of persons with disabilities,” said Steve Estey, Chairperson of Council of Canadians with Disabilities International Committee.

## GARY BIRCH HONOURED WITH GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD

On Tuesday, November 10th, Gary Birch, Executive Director of the Neil Squire Society, was honoured with a Global Citizenship Award at the 15th Annual UBC Alumni Achievement Awards.

The Global Citizenship Award recognizes a UBC graduate who has made a significant contribution to the betterment of the global community through one or more of the following: research initiatives, teaching, social, cultural or artistic innovation, healthcare, economic development, human rights and environmental protection.

The reception and awards ceremony took place from 5:30 – 8:00 pm, followed by the Elements of Achievement After Party at the Life Sciences Centre at UBC, and was hosted by Global TV travel consultant and Travel Best Bets president, Claire Newell, and CBC reporter, Duncan McCue.

## The Neil Squire Society And Social Media

This past year was monumental for the Neil Squire Society and social media.

In recent years, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have begun to change the way people and businesses communicate with one another. People from all parts of the globe can now keep in touch and share news in real time. In 2009, the Neil Squire Society started to take advantage of these emerging technologies and we are pleased to report that we now have a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.



## FRIENDS FOR ABILITIES CIRCLE MEMBERS

Cathy Beaumont  
Gary Birch  
Clay Braziller  
Don Danbrook  
Don Evans  
Bruce Gregg  
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Mary Frances Laughton  
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Supporting the Neil Squire Society

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## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2010 \$</b>	<b>2009 \$</b>
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	1,4000	62,126
Restricted cash	60,000	90,000
Accounts receivable	464,271	568,476
Prepaid expenses and other assets	28,867	22,064
	<b>554,538</b>	742,666
Capital assets	44,398	65,882
	<b>589,936</b>	808,548
 <b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cheques issued in excess of funds on deposit	99,750	-
Bank loan	90,000	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	152,478	143,130
Deferred revenue	109,876	250,061
	<b>452,104</b>	393,191
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	7,371	22,934
	<b>459,475</b>	416,125
Total liabilities	<b>459,475</b>	416,125
Net assets	<b>139,461</b>	392,423
	<b>598,936</b>	808,548

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2010 \$</b>	<b>2009 \$</b>
Grants	1,791,040	2,542,424
Services	943,917	1,109,039
Training fees	305,881	155,043
Gaming	90,000	76,073
Donations - cash	80,698	118,313
- in kind	6,139	-
Interest and other	9,298	7,976
	<b>3,226,973</b>	<b>4,008,868</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries and benefits	2,167,556	2,440,318
Consulting and contracts	304,648	535,560
Rent	351,299	368,970
Equipment lease and maintenance - expenditures	146,500	150,017
- in kind	94,557	104,911
Client tuitions	6,139	-
Travel	99,067	104,896
Vocational assessments and medical reports	68,664	89,740
Material and supplies	70,569	71,344
Telecommunications	39,469	32,375
Marketing and program development	41,936	31,676
Insurance	17,101	22,189
Other	21,947	21,510
Professional development	6,573	15,659
Postage and courier	9,646	9,020
Legal and audit	5,984	9,015
Honorariums	1,335	2,990
	<b>3,452,990</b>	<b>4,010,190</b>
<b>Revenue over (under) expenses before other items</b>	<b>(226,017)</b>	<b>(1,322)</b>
<b>Other items</b>		
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	15,563	42,067
Amortization of capital assets	(42,508)	(58,517)
<b>Revenue over (under) expenses for the year</b>	<b>(252,962)</b>	<b>(17,772)</b>

Extracted from the complete Audited Financial Statements. Complete Audited Financial Statements are available through the Burnaby office.

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[www.neilsquire.ca](http://www.neilsquire.ca)

## NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY

Head Office & Western Regional Office  
220 – 2250 Boundary Road  
Burnaby, BC V5M 3Z3  
T 604.473.9363  
F 604.473.9364

## PRAIRIE REGIONAL OFFICE

100 – 2445 13th Avenue  
Regina, SK S4P 0W1  
T 306.781.6023  
F 306.522.9474

## CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

150 – 34 Colonnade Road  
Ottawa, ON K2E 7J6  
T 613.723.3575  
F 613.723.3579

## ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE

104 – 440 Wilsey Road  
Fredericton, NB E3B 7G5  
T 506.450.7999  
F 506.453.9681

## TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBILITY GROUP

4355 Mathissi Place  
Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8  
T 604.412.7599  
F 604.434.4493

## BCI LAB

c/o ICORD, Blusson Spinal Cord Centre  
3230-818 West 10th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9

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