

Neil  
**SQUIRE**  
S O C I E T Y

We use technology, knowledge and passion to  
empower Canadians with physical disabilities.



Annual Report 2011 - 2012

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The Neil Squire Society is committed to accessibility. If you would like to receive this report in an alternative or paper format, please contact us at [info@neilsquire.ca](mailto:info@neilsquire.ca).

## Message from the Chair

From our earliest days, the Neil Squire Society has used technology to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Canada and beyond.



Our role in making technology accessible has evolved over time. As physical access to technology has improved, we have transitioned to providing skill development to our participants through the use of computers. This has enabled them to join the work force, become increasingly independent, and provide opportunities for social inclusion and entertainment through email, the web, and social media. For these reasons, training people to effectively use a computer remains central to our services.

The accessibility mobile technologies are a major concern for people with disabilities. The ability to access a cellular phone is vital for basic safety and security. The smartphone, if made accessible, is becoming an incredible enabler, opening doors for enhanced inclusion.

Not only are we innovating participants through the use of technology, but also in the delivery of our services. We are increasing our services by delivering them through a fully accessible distance learning platform. This is allowing us to serve participants living in remote and new locations. Distance learning will continue to grow as a service we provide to Canadians.

Thank you for sharing our mission and for your support of the Neil Squire Society and our participants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Attwell'.

Rob Attwell  
Chair



## “I Had No Idea What My Profession Would Be”

Amelia was working towards a geography degree at Kwantlen Polytechnic University,

and also looking for a part time job to support her tuition costs and living expenses. Amelia has Osteogenesis imperfecta, a genetic bone disorder. As a result of this, she deals with mobility and pain issues.

Amelia enrolled in both the Computer Comfort Program and the Employ-Ability Program. *“In Computer Comfort, I learned how to use different Microsoft Office programs and Dragon Naturally Speaking, which helped me enter text more efficiently using my voice,”* says Amelia. *“In the Employ-Ability Program, staff helped me explore different career paths. I learned new job skills and how to set employment goals.”*

Following completion of the Employ-Ability Program, Amelia secured a part-time job with Opportunities for the Disabled. More importantly, however, the Program *“helped me figure out what career I will probably follow after I finish my degree.”* Amelia has plans to complete her degree and work towards a doctorate.



## “They Taught Me To Be Well Prepared”

Leiah’s disability, Stickler’s Syndrome, is a very rare group of genetic disorders affecting connective tissue, specifically collagen. *“The collagen in my left*

*hip is completely worn out so its bone on bone which makes me very sore at times and not very flexible,”* says Leiah. Leigh also has hearing loss and sight problems which means she must wear hearing aids and contact lenses.

*“I really enjoyed meeting new people and getting to know the staff and the friends I’ve made. They are so very unique and wonderful,”* said Leiah. *“I have learned a lot about interviewing skills and how to build my resume and make a cover letter. I feel a lot more confident in going after a job because they taught me to be well prepared. The staff are very experienced people and taught me lots and I couldn’t of asked for a better staff to teach me.”* Leiah has plans to use her new interviewing skills and new resume *“to find a job that will be perfect for me and my body that I will enjoy doing!”*

## Meaghan Achieves Two Goals

When Meaghan first visited the Neil Squire Society’s Ontario office she had two goals. The first was to find employment that she enjoyed and which challenged her. The second was to live independently in an apartment of her own.

Meaghan faces many challenges including Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (EDS) a defect of the connective tissue that causes pain and fatigue, dyslexia, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). She was also recently diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis.



While participating in the Employ-Ability Program, Meaghan was determined to enhance the skills that would help her both professionally and personally.

Meaghan is now working part-time with the Phoenix Centre, an organization that provides family support services. In her role, she is responsible for entering information into a data base and organizing the Centre’s resource library. *“It’s a great opportunity to learn new skills and become familiar with an office setting,”* shares Meaghan.

Meaghan achieved her first goal and moved quickly toward her second. With the same determination, one week after securing employment, Meaghan moved into her own apartment.

## With the Right Support, Jeff Finds Solutions



Jeff has degenerative arthritis, calcium build up, and a severed tendon in his right shoulder. For the past 20 years he’s worked in a physical environment. With a learning disability, a criminal record, and a lack of higher education, Jeff felt that *“future employment seemed limited.”*

Jeff participated in the Employ-Ability program in Regina, Saskatchewan. The program helped him to research employment opportunities based on his goals. *“Instead of looking negatively at these barriers, they have shown me how, with the right support behind you, you can find solutions. With a renewed confidence in all my skills and abilities, I am looking into finding part time employment and going to post-secondary school,”* he says.

Jeff’s next steps are to follow his Employment Action Plan, get physically fit, and pursue either the Primary Care Paramedic certificate or go to the University of Regina and pursue a justice degree.

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## No Looking Back For Kayla

Kayla has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Growing up Kayla was placed in specialized classes and modified courses in the public school system. By high school Kayla was getting frustrated and bored. She ultimately dropped out.

Kayla realized that in order to get a job, she needed to at least have a high school diploma. In the spring of 2009, at the age of 18, she enrolled in the Community Adult



Learning Program (CALP) at the Neil Squire Society and get her General Education Diploma (GED).

Kayla's next step was to figure out what she wanted to do with the rest of her life.

Kayla signed up for the Employ-Ability program, also offered at the Neil Squire Society, and as she puts it, *"I have never looked back."*

Kayla describes her journey as one big eye opener into her future. It all began with the Employ-Ability program where she started exploring her interests, values, abilities and skills. Her career assessments consistently pointed her to the *"great outdoors."* Kayla was very thorough doing research on the National Occupational Classification (NOC) and Labour Market Information (LMI) websites. From this information, she began to identify people to contact for networking opportunities and to learn more about educational requirements. In the end, Kayla chose the environment and forest technology field.

Kayla has gained many valuable tools while in the Employ-Ability program. She accessed many valuable tools for work and life; topics like teamwork, communication, assertiveness, working with employers, time management and organizational skills. She credits much of this in helping her build her self-confidence and self-esteem.

The Neil Squire Society referred Kayla to the provincial Post-Secondary Education and Training Department to seek funding for training. Her Action Plan for Employment was reviewed and she was referred to the YMCA Youth Internship program where she secured a six month internship with the federal Department of Natural Resources – Canadian Forest Service. Kayla states that this internship has further confirmed her decision to work in the forestry sector. Kayla is currently attending the Maritime College of Forest and Technology.

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## Wayne Bonds With His Daughter Through Technology

Wayne has been increasing his knowledge of computers over the past few months through the Distance Computer Comfort Program at the Penticton Indian Band's Footprints to Technology Centre a partner site of the Neil Squire Society.



Wayne has a teenage daughter, and he was hoping to learn facebook and email so he could both teach her, and know what to watch out for to keep her safe online.

After a couple months, the Neil Squire Society was able to provide Wayne with a computer of his own through the Computer Refurbishment Program so that he could work from home. With his own computer, Wayne no longer had to travel to the Footprints Centre every week. Additionally, using the computer is an activity he and his daughter can now do together at home.

Recently, Wayne has been picking different fruits around his area of the Okanagan to earn some income, and will be starting up in the Employ-Ability Program at the end of the summer to explore his career and employment options.

## Job Focus Helps Aman Do What He Loves

Aman has been a client with the Neil Squire Society's Job Focus program for just over a year. Aman was born with Achondroplasia, a genetic bone disorder that results in dwarfism. Though he had done some work for friends and family, he had never really been employed and aimed to change that by finding a part-time or full-time job.



In high school, Aman took a Desktop Publishing course. It was then that he says he *"fell in love with designing layouts and promotional items."* He also learned how to create a magazine from cover to cover which led him to the Publishing Program at Langara College.

The Job Focus program was very motivating for Aman. He enjoyed learning how to improve his resume and how to write a cover letter *"the right way"*. Aman met Rina Gill, the owner of HYPE Advertising Agency, who hired him to create event booklets for the Surrey Business Tradeshow. Aman is now working in a freelance capacity, doing what he loves.



## Sarah Hits the Books and Sets Her Sights High

Sarah was born with Thrombocytopenia-Absent Radius Syndrome, also known as TAR Syndrome. This condition is characterized by the absence of a radius bone in each forearm. Sarah also has Cystic Fibrosis.

Sarah was not quite sure what career path she wanted to follow. Sarah had some definitive interests when she

entered into the Employ-Ability Program and she was a whiz with the computer when she met with one of the Neil Squire Society's Certified Assistive Technology Specialist. They worked with Sarah to adjust her computer workstation and provided her with a smaller keyboard to better suit her petite stature. With that in place, Sarah began to delve into her career exploration.

Through the Employ-Ability Program's recognized career development process, Sarah was able to narrow down her career ideas and decided to pursue a career in the accounting field. Now Sarah has her head in the books and eyes to the future as a student in the Business Administration Accounting program at New Brunswick Community College!



## Lisa Gains Independence Through Computer Comfort

Lisa lives with a severed spinal cord at the C5 and C6 vertebrae leaving her with

very limited movement in her wrists, shoulders and hands and requiring her to use a powered wheelchair to get around.

Lisa had learned limited computer skills as a receptionist for an insurance company, a job she had held for twelve years, but found that those skills were not really transferable as the program she used there was only used in that particular office. So when she got a computer for her home she knew she needed some help learning the basics.

Since participating in the Computer Comfort Program Lisa believes she has become more independent in dealing with her family. *"We're spread right across Canada. Through Facebook I can find out what everybody's doing, how their health is, their jobs are, children and grandchildren etcetera. That's a great motivator for me."*

## "At the Age of 11 I Was Declared Legally Blind"



At the age of eleven, Joshua was declared legally blind, and was diagnosed with Wolfram Syndrome.

Joshua first visited the Neil Squire Society seeking job search support. He attended several Employ-Ability workshops.

During the workshop entitled "Disclosure of a Disability to Potential Employers" Joshua learned how to talk to employers about his disability, with confidence. Joshua demonstrated this in his practice script, stating *"although I am legally blind and nearsighted I can read with an increased font size and with the use of assistive devices, such as Zoom-text. With these tools I can perform all the duties of the job. I am creative and have strong attention to detail, which helps me do the job well"*.

Joshua secured a position with a media productions team at the Community Resource Centre in Killaloe. He is helping educate the community about non-profit organizations through various multi-media productions such as films, broadcasts and pod casts.

## Teah Finds Another Family at the Neil Squire Society

At the age of 46, Teah was diagnosed with congestive heart failure and a few months later found out she had breast cancer. After years of rehabilitation and chemotherapy, Teah wanted to finally get her life going again and find employment. Teah was referred to the Neil Squire Society and enrolled in the Society's Employ-Ability program in Fredericton, New Brunswick.



Teah was glad that the Employ-Ability program also focused on other components of life and work. She especially enjoyed learning about teamwork, listening skills and developing memory techniques. Not only did she learn many valuable skills, but she found another family in the Neil Squire Society and with her Employ-Ability peers.

At the end of the program, Teah had developed a solid action plan for employment with detailed steps as to how she would become self-sufficient again. Teah is presently working for a day care centre, working with a special needs child. She is also volunteering with an agency, assisting adults with intellectual disabilities.

## Worksafe NB 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Health and Safety Conference

Worksafe NB held its 31st Annual Health and Safety Conference showcasing the latest in health and safety products and services. Staff from the Neil Squire Society's Atlantic region attended the conference as exhibitors. This was a tremendous opportunity for the Neil Squire Society to get the word out about what we do, to expand our network of employer contacts, and to nurture existing relationships like the one with Worksafe NB. We were the only organization in attendance promoting employment services for individuals with disabilities and assistive technology for safety planning and prevention of workplace injuries. While speaking with employers and other conference attendees, it was clear that there is a definite need for assistive technology, both for activities of daily living and on the job, a void that the Neil Squire Society is working to fill.



## Neil Squire Society Recognized in Canada's Budget 2012

The Neil Squire Society is honoured to be mentioned in the Government of Canada's Budget 2012. In the budget document, the government quotes *"From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2011, the Neil Squire Society provided employment services to 571 people with disabilities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick under a \$3.5-million Opportunities Fund project. At the end of the project, 201 participants were employed and 77 had returned to school"*.

The full budget can be viewed at [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca) – Budget Plan – Table of Contents – Chapter 3.3: Investing in Training, Infrastructure and Opportunity - Improving Labour Market Opportunities for Canadians with Disabilities.



## Distance Computer Comfort Program Update

The Neil Squire Society's Computer Comfort Program helps Canadians with disabilities learn how to use computers, enabling them to become more fully participating members of society. Working one-on-one with volunteer tutors, Computer Comfort participants work towards their individual computer goals. Working at their own pace, participants gain confidence and learn how to use various computer programs, the internet, email, and different types of assistive technology.



Last year, the Neil Squire Society began offering this program via Distance Learning with great success. To date, the Distance Computer Comfort Program has helped 59 participants in 30

communities and in 6 provinces and territories across Canada. Many of these participants are from remote communities where there are no such programs available. Some live with mobility or health issues which make it difficult for them to attend sessions outside their home. Now, with the help of Distance Computer Comfort, these marginalized individuals have the skills necessary to seek employment, education, or volunteer opportunities; and participate more fully in society.

## An Exciting New Partnership Is Now Underway In New Brunswick

E-learning managers from the Central Valley Adult Learning Association met with staff from the Neil Squire Society in the Atlantic Region for a crash course on the Employ-Ability program.



In June, the Neil Squire Society and the Central Valley Adult Learning Association signed a memorandum of understanding to pilot the Employ-Ability program in eight e-learning centers throughout New Brunswick. Through this new partnership and exciting distance learning technologies, the Neil Squire Society will be able to reach out to even more individuals with disabilities, especially those in rural communities.

E-learning managers were treated to a full day of interactive activities, introductions to the Neil Squire Society and all that we do, and an afternoon of experiential learning where they got to experience for themselves the wonders of distance learning with Moodle and Elluminate.

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

## 2011 - 2012

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# Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2012

	2012 \$	2011 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>(Current)</b>		
Cash	240,386	21,735
Restricted cash	75,043	75,016
Accounts receivable and unbilled revenue	464,840	409,906
Prepaid expenses	44,159	29,168
	<b>824,428</b>	<b>535,825</b>
Capital assets	70,920	44,938
	<b>895,348</b>	<b>580,763</b>
	2012 \$	2011 \$
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>(Current)</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	291,684	231,773
Deferred revenue	356,738	143,474
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>648,422</b>	<b>375,247</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>246,926</b>	<b>205,516</b>
	<b>895,348</b>	<b>580,763</b>

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

# Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2012

	2012 \$	2011 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grants	2,416,934	2,069,112
Services	1,221,697	1,102,642
Training fees	141,614	214,853
Gaming	75,157	60,000
Donations – cash	20,799	37,747
– in kind	19,288	6,526
Interest and other	1,244	530
	3,896,733	3,491,410
	2012 \$	2011 \$
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries and benefits	2,264,179	2,134,547
Consulting and contracts	374,178	286,764
Rent	420,968	369,088
Travel	152,540	140,598
Equipment lease and maintenance - expenditures	199,247	119,095
- in kind	19,288	6,526
Client tuitions	103,515	81,443
Telecommunications	71,180	69,377
Material and supplies	60,826	59,369
Vocational assessments and medical reports	32,691	24,062
Marketing and program development	23,993	26,010
Professional development	20,739	9,957
Insurance	22,398	21,848
Legal and audit	35,977	29,565
Other	13,291	12,391
Postage and courier	10,266	8,970
Honorariums	7,312	7,234
	3,832,588	3,406,844
<b>Revenue over expenses before other items</b>	<b>64,145</b>	<b>84,566</b>
<b>Other items</b>		
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	-	7,371
Amortization of capital assets	(22,735)	(25,882)
	41,410	66,055
<b>Revenue over expenses for the year</b>	<b>41,410</b>	<b>66,055</b>

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

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