

Rights and dignity of all disabled persons upheld!

Statement by Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic with Respect to R. v. Latimer

The Supreme Court of Canada today has affirmed the human rights and dignity of all disabled persons by its decision in *r. v. Latimer*. This decision is deeply welcome.

Everyone is deserving of respect and protection, whether or not a person has a significant disability. Human rights and dignity are inherent in every human being as an individual, not in whether or not someone else deems that person to be worthy of inclusion in the protective human family, and still less in whether the care of that person is difficult for other individuals or costly to institutions. It is rather the responsibility of all of society to be

in solidarity with the disabled and those close to them in finding solutions to practical challenges through a high standard of medical and supportive care.

Innumerable families give so much of themselves in helping a disabled parent, sister, brother, daughter or son to embrace life to the full. They find in that mutual love an irreplaceable meaning. They deserve our profound admiration, our recognition and our support.

Let no one think that this decision touches only the fundamental interests of "someone else", or that guarding the rights of the disabled is important only to those who have a personal stake in the issues. We are one human family;

differences are matters of degree and variety, not of substance. Each of us has, in varying degrees and at varying times of our lives, been in need of support, or vulnerable and in need of the care of others. For some it is a long-term reality. For others it is a temporary condition because of illness, trauma, misfortune or the dependency which is natural at the beginning and the end of life. Who among us has not at some time been excluded or marginalized by others who did not wish to recognize us as members of their group? That does not negate us in ourselves, our personhood and our rights. Yet a brief survey of the history of the world, particularly that of the last century, tells us

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what happens when the inherent right to be recognized as a living member of the human family, as a full member of civil society, is denied to individuals or to groups on grounds of their physical or physiological traits, their race, their culture, their ancestry, their religion, or any other personal characteristic.

We owe the disabled a great debt of gratitude; among their many other contributions to humanity, they have rendered this principle starkly clear. Tracy Latimer will be remembered, both in this country and wherever else euthanasia is falsely presented as a solution to people's need for living, and sometimes complex, care and support.

The Supreme Court today has affirmed the inherent human rights and dignity of the disabled. Make no mistake. In doing so it has affirmed the inherent human rights and dignity of every one of us.



Everyone knows Gladys!

By Shawn Michael Kernaghan and Manu Verna

Gladys lived with her mother until coming to Our Lady of Victory Place in July 1995.

Gladys enjoyed having her own apartment, which she was able to maintain with staff assistance. She also received a great deal of support from family and friends. She is a very strong and courageous woman who is always optimistic.

During the month of July, Gladys moved from the Supported Independent Living program at Our Lady of Victory Place, to another program at Mary Centre located at Whitecap. Gladys, who is an extrovert, loves to meet new people, which enabled her to adapt very quickly to her new living arrangements. Gladys quickly became an active person within her new community. She currently

attends a day program three days a week. On Saturdays she goes bowling, and on Sundays she attends Church. Gladys loves to knit. When Gladys is not out and about making new friends you will find her knitting clothes for her nieces. Gladys' presence at Whitecap, is partly responsible for the warm and loving atmosphere you find there. She is a very understanding, giving and caring person who puts other peoples needs ahead of her own. She is very outgoing and has excellent social and people skills.

Gladys has maintained a close friendship with Bill, and Linda as well as her many other friends and acquaintances. Gladys has an excellent sense of family and enjoys their continuous support and many visits. Being a "**social butterfly**", Gladys enjoys being a hostess and always makes visitors to her home feel welcome. Gladys never wants to miss anything and is always included in everything. She is a very lovely Lady to be around!

Meet Connie!

By Tracey Berman

In November of 2000, I was privileged to have the opportunity to meet Connie and her mother. Connie is a very bright, friendly and outgoing young lady who has an excellent sense of humour.

Connie lives at home with her mother and sister in the Mississauga area. Connie who is 24 years old has a developmental disability and has Cerebral Palsy, which has placed her in a wheelchair. Connie was eager to have a Respite Care worker to accompany her on many of her social activities.

Connie is involved in several community based social groups, such as The Wednesday Night Youth Group that meets at Square One. This group plans all sorts of outings and activities. On February 17th the group, along with Connie and her Respite Worker Hermeet went to the CN tower for the day. They have also gone to the movies and miniature golfing.

The other groups that Connie is involved in are Erin Oaks YAHO Social Group and a weekly drop-

in-group. Connie loves to keep active and enjoys bowling, swimming dancing, and meeting new people, writing poetry and doing art.

In the Spring, Connie will be going on an overnight camping experience and her worker Hermeet will be going with her. Connie would like to thank Hermeet for all her help and would like to tell her how much she really enjoys spending time with her.

Connie has expressed an interest in doing some Volunteer work in her community. She would be interested in speaking to people who need someone to talk to or just listen, as] she is eager to share her zest for life with others and hopefully make a difference in their lives. If anyone knows of a place that could benefit from Connie's talents please let me know.

Information for this article was provided by Mrs. Roberts and Connie.

Staff salute!

In January of 1993, the beautiful home of Greenbriar opened its doors and

from day one, Anthony Hughes has been there.

When you first meet Anthony what you notice most is his friendly, outgoing manner, as well as his dedication to Angelo, Carol Jean, John and Karen. Anthony is a dedicated employee and goes **above and beyond the call of duty** even while he is on vacation. Known to be a **'jack of all trades'**, Anthony keeps the house in good repair. He is also able to split his time between Greenbriar and supporting residents in SIL Woodbridge program.

He is a dedicated father to **Cameron**, his 5-year-old son. In his spare time, when he is not stripping furniture, shopping at the 'Brampton boutique', pumping iron or doing some kind of renovation, you find Anthony volunteering with children.

What a great asset he is to Mary Centre, especially for his contributions to the Newsletter and Health & Safety Committees. During last year's ShareLife Campaign he spoke with Angelo at St. Anthony's Church in Etobicoke. God bless him for always being there when we need him!

Mary Centre goes high tech!

As more and more people gain access to the internet, many organizations are using the information highway as a means to get a higher profile in their communities. Mary Centre is no exception and is in the process of developing a website. With a click from a computer mouse, you can get information on the agency and its various programs such as Respite Care as well as an electronic version of this newsletter. At this time,

the website is still under construction, so please stay tuned for the official launching of

www.marycentre.com. We welcome your feedback. E-mail us at dconforti@marycentre.com

Mark Your Calendar!	
April 22-28th	Volunteer Appreciation Week
May 30th	2 nd Annual Golf Tournament
June 2nd & 3rd	BBQ Loblaws, Victoria Park and Gerrard
TBA	BBQ Loblaws York Mills & Yonge Street
October 20th	Volunteer Recognition Dinner The Old Mill
November 8 & 9	4th Annual Gala Famous People Players Dinner Theatre



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If you would like more information about Mary Centre and/or you would like to make a donation, please clip out this section, complete the information and return to our office.

- I would like more information about the agency
- I would like information on becoming a volunteer

I enclose a donation of: \$200.00 \$100.00 \$50.00 Other _____

Cheque enclosed. I wish to use my Visa Card Amex

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Expiry Date _____ Signature _____

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