White Cane Week aims to create among Canadians a greater respect for the white cane as a symbol of independence not dependence.

White Cane Week activities include:

- In particular, I'm intrigued by this remarkable national bonspiel, part of the official launch of White Cane Week 2005.

Message from the Governor General

With this year's theme, "Accessibility Promotes Ability, not Disability," this initiative offers an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by Canadians with visual impairments.

Message from the Prime Minister

White Cane Week aims to create among Canadians a greater respect for the white cane as a symbol of independence not dependence.

White Cane Week Activities

The Council is a community-based organization governed by the members of the blind and visually impaired members of that community.

Member Profiles
A LACK OF SIGHT IS NOT A LACK OF VISION

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND —

Changing what it means to be blind

The Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) is a national self-help consumer organization of persons blind, deaf-blind and visually impaired.

Over the years since it’s founding in 1944, the CCB has grown and evolved to become recognized as Canada’s “voice of blind Canadians”. Starting out with but a handful of individuals there are now some 85 plus affiliated Clubs across Canada.

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

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www.ccbnational.net
2006 will be the sixtieth time that the first week in February has been designated as the national public awareness program for the blind and visually impaired. The Council assumed sole responsibility for this event two years ago and is committed to increasing its impact and reach.

- During the week our members and volunteers participate in many different public events at both the local and national levels. All the events are committed to raising the awareness of the White Cane as a “symbol of ability not disability” and extending public support for the accessibility that is crucial to the quality of life for those in our community – the community of the blind and visually impaired.

- Support from all three levels of government and public institutions has been gratifying and the increased media interest we saw this year encourages the Council to continue its commitment to the development of White Cane Week.

- The Council is committed to managing the Week as a public awareness program and seeks corporate support to cover its costs.

- WCW 05 included many local events, some of which are portrayed in this report, and the first Ottawa invitational national curling bonspiel. The Bonspiel was a wonderful success for all involved and for the platform it provided to demonstrate the abilities within our community. With the availability of the appropriate support the event will be held again during WCW 06, February 5th to 11th

Harold Schnellert
National President
Canadian Council of the Blind
Speech on the Occasion of the Official Launch of White Cane Week 2005

Ottawa, Monday, February 7, 2005

I'm pleased to join all of you today here at the historic Ottawa Curling Club. Around here, the “roaring game” is very much on our minds these days, with the exciting way in which the Jenn Hanna rink from Ottawa won its way to a chance to compete for the national championship. I will also be travelling this week to the Royal Montreal Curling Club, where they are looking forward to celebrating 200 years of playing this deep-rooted, rather civilized Canadian game. We didn't invent it, but we play it better than anyone!

But in particular, I'm intrigued by this remarkable national bonspiel, part of the official launch of White Cane Week 2005. As Patron of the Canadian Council of the Blind, I am glad to inaugurate this week of awareness and empowerment for blind and visually impaired Canadians. For 60 years, the CCB has been the “voice of blind Canadians”, and I admire the determination and self-sufficiency that have guided your work since the Council was founded in 1944.

To conceive of such an organization, and to build and sustain it, required vision. That collective insight has resulted in greater feelings of confidence and accomplishment for your community. It has created greater public awareness that blindness is not a cause for pity or grief but simply an obstacle to be overcome. It offers reasons for us to think about the barriers to accessibility that are, often needlessly, erected in our public spaces and in the public mind. In particular, the vision of the CCB has fostered, for 59 years now, the concept of the white cane as a symbol and as a tool of ability. It reminds everyone that the blind are not shut away in a narrow and limited existence. They're too busy living. They're too busy curling!

In building a compassionate society, we walk a fine line. In Canada, citizens are encouraged to care more for the needs of others than for their own wants. We wish to ensure that there is opportunity and assistance for all, but without condescension. All of us have needs, and we simply want them to be part of our society's equation of caring and order.

Those with visual or other impairments are no different in this regard. The CCB has steadily voiced and enabled this desire, speaking not on behalf of the blind but from them. Your motto – "A lack of sight is not a lack of vision" – is a great reminder of what we all know, if we think about it. Having perfect eyesight is no guarantee that someone has genuine understanding, or the ability to solve difficult problems, or the willingness to work for the greater social good. These things belong to the arena of insight, and they are available to everyone. Along with its work for and with the blind, the Council and its members offer Canadians a quiet example of this truth every week of the year.

The great Irish writer Jonathan Swift, best known for Gulliver’s Travels, also left behind him this powerful thought: “Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.” It is the capacity to notice what is essential in our hearts and minds: wit, kindness, sincerity, fairness. Vision is the gift of recognizing hidden possibilities. This is an art that all of us should spend our lives in developing, an art that the Canadian Council of the Blind encourages simply as a matter of daily routine.

On behalf of all Canadians, I am happy to participate in this inauguration of White Cane Week, and to proclaim its message of ability and interdependence. I wish you an inspiring series of events, here today in Ottawa and throughout the week.
A MESSAGE FROM
THE PRIME MINISTER
His Excellency the Right Honourable Paul Martin

On the Occasion of the Official Launch of
White Cane Week 2005
Ottawa, Monday, February 7, 2005

I am delighted to offer my greetings to those taking part in the activities surrounding White Cane Week 2005, organized by the Canadian Council of the Blind taking place from February 6th to the 12th.

With this year’s theme, “Accessibility Promotes Ability, not Disability”, this noble initiative offers an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by the blind and visually impaired, as well as to promote the need for increased accessibility for this particular population within Canada. In order to be worthy of the ideals of our great country, we must strive to eliminate the barriers that marginalize our fellow citizens with disabilities and ensure that all members of Canadian society enjoy equal opportunity.

Indeed, by developing specific programs that encourage self-reliance and community participation, you can all take great pride in your contribution to increasing the quality of life of Canadians living with a visual disability. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all those responsible for organizing this initiative.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful White Cane Week.
WHITE CANE WEEK ACTIVITIES

**Sydney, Cape Breton**
We started White Cane Week on Feb. 5th by attending a Quebec Major Junior Hockey League game between the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles and the Acadie-Bathurst Titan. We set up an information booth in the main foyer of the stadium, where we spoke to hundreds of people, and provided them with information about the CCB. The highlight was at the beginning of the game, when they played our PSA, announced it was WCW, and Louise Gillis, (President of our club) went out onto the red carpet to drop the puck to begin the game.

**Prince George, British Columbia**
The CBC, as well as our community Channel 10, showed the video PSA during the week. CBC Radio and 101Hits-FM aired the audio version of the PSA, and Joan Jarman of the Prince George Public Library did interviews about White Cane Week for stations 97.3FM The Wolf and 99FM The Drive.

**Ontario Amateur Radio**
For the past 57 years, the first week of February has traditionally been White Cane Week...

**Guelph, Ontario**
Our chapter had an awareness and Information display during White Cane Week. The display was very busy with a lot of information given to people. Many thanked us for providing them with a better understanding of vision loss and where to find peer support.

**Regina, Saskatchewan**
Banners, brochures and posters were displayed in libraries and schools and community centres.
The PSA’s were played throughout White Cane Week on nine radio and four television stations and as member was interviewed on Access television.

Mira Road Elementary, Cape Breton

Louise Gillis and Raymond Young from the Canadian Council of the Blind made a wonderful presentation during White Cane Week. They were very interesting and very informative: they brought simulated glasses to demonstrate the various sight problems one could have.

Halifax, Nova Scotia

The White Cane Week materials were displayed in schools, libraries and hospitals, the professional medical buildings, drug stores, the Acadian Bus Lines, and Via Rail.

St. John’s, Newfoundland

Saint John’s poster boy for independence is likely Canadian Council of the Blind member Dan Gilchrist. The 48-year-old lost his sight when he was a 20-year-old community college student. For many years, Mr. Gilchrist lived in St. Martins and made regular treks to Saint John on his own. That meant a combination of catching a bus to the city limit at Willow Grove and hitchhiking the rest of the way.

When his father passed away, Mr. Gilchrist continued to live in the family home, and shop and cook for himself. He’d type up a grocery list on a computer, and take a printout to Sobey’s, where an employee would gather the items together. Once home, he’d store the cans alphabetically so he’d know where everything was.

SJ Telegraph-Journal.
February 7, 2005
Edmonton, Alberta

Councilor Haytor read the City of Edmonton Proclamation proclaiming February 6 – 12, 2005 as White Cane Week, on behalf of Mayor Steven Mandel. Miriam Schnellert made a presentation concerning the need for increased Braille literacy amongst blind students in the school system.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

CCB Tech-Ease Chapter.

As our project we did a presentation at Grant Park Shopping Centre. We used a laptop computer with JAWS speech to demonstrate how screen-reading software has made computers accessible for the visually impaired. We also had a scanner that uses a program called Kurzweil, which uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. OCR software enables the printed material that is scanned to be read by the computer. We generated a lot of interest and informed many people about White Cane Week.

Comox, British Columbia

The Comox Valley Chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind – manned an informative display at the Driftwood Mall. Many members of the public asked questions of our members and volunteers.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

A dinner to honour the athletes who competed in the 2004 Paralympics, in particular Kirby Cote from Manitoba also recognized the achievements of the curling team from Manitoba and outstanding was held at The Radisson Downtown Hotel on Friday, February 11th.

Kirby Coté.

Kirby won Canada’s first medal with a gold in the 100-metre butterfly and added golds in the 50, 100 and 400 freestyle and 200 individual medley and silvers in the 100 breaststroke and 100 backstroke.

Hamilton, Ontario

Tuesday, February 8, Hamilton chapter hosted “An Evening With Terry Kelly and Friends”. The concert was held at McMaster University, and musicians included George Kindred & Jacques Pilon, Janice Buckley & the Jammers, Dave Souliere, Angela McKay & Friends, with the highlight of the night being Terry Kelly.
Kitchener, Ontario

2005 - WHITE CANE WEEK

Canadian Council for the Blind: On Monday, I was pleased to attend an Open House kicking off the Canadian Council for the Blind “White Cane Week 2005” at the Brick Brewery. An annual event for the past 57 years, White Cane Week raises awareness for the blind and visually impaired. The Canadian Council for the Blind’s slogan states: “A lack of sight is not a lack of vision.” For more information, visit: www.ccbnational.net

John Milloty MPP

London, Ontario

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Excerpts from article by Donna MacMullin Gazette Staff

TRYING TO GET BEYOND THE WHITE CANE

Consider how you get around from day-to-day. Now consider the challenges you would face if you could not see. This is one of the things communities across Canada are hoping people will think about this week – during the annual white cane awareness campaign.

Gladys Borowski, co-ordinator of White Cane Week in London, said the occasion is intended to bring awareness to people in the community of what the white cane is. “We want to educate the public and let people know that being blind is nothing to be embarrassed about,” she said.

Visually-impaired herself, Borowski said the most significant challenge those with the disability face is the courage and ability to be independent. “Trying to get around without people to guide you is often difficult,” she said. “The white cane is symbolic of gaining independence.”

Jennifer Boag, a third-year music education student at Western, is a white cane user who has been visually impaired all her life but completely lost her vision four years ago. In her experience at Western she said people are very helpful, although she sometimes has trouble in open spaces and traveling in the snow is often difficult.

Did You Know?

The thin white cane that is used by those with visual impairment could be considered a form of cyborg relations with the outside world it lengthens the reach of your sense of touch, allowing you to avoid objects that you are approaching. A more advanced version of this is currently being developed called the sonar stick. Which relies on echo location much the same way the bats do to determine location. “Just as a bat judges the distance to its prey by the reflection of the high frequency sounds it emits, four pulsating pads located on the stick’s handle vibrate at varying intensities depending on the proximity of an object. A fast and strong signal means that an obstacle is close. A slow and weak signal means that an obstacle is further away.” This is taken from “here:”

York University Blog
February, 2005
Ottawa, Ontario

White Cane Week - Canadian Council of the Blind pledges $1 million for bursary

Carleton University
By Suzanne Jordan

Carleton has always maintained a sincere commitment to ensuring academically qualified individuals have access to post-secondary education.

With the recent unprecedented $1 million commitment from the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB), the tradition will only continue to flourish.

The funds will go towards the establishment of a bursary fund for blind or visually impaired students.

Third-year Psychology student, Candice MacIntosh-Olesevich, who has a visual impairment, spoke at the cheque presentation. I know this will help students with visual impairments achieve their full potential, both today, and in the future.

New Brunswick

SJ Telegraph-Journal

Blindness doesn't mean loss of spirit. Seniors living a full life without the gift of sight

by Mia Urquhart

At a gathering during White Cane Week Mrs. Farrer, with 10% vision, offers her elbow to help a blind friend from the dining room to the kitchen, her husband quips about "the blind leading the blind". Mary. Farrer says, "When you have a disability, you've got to have a good attitude." - "...and be able to laugh," adds Mrs. Middleton.

Estelle Middleton had perfect vision until she was 32. Within six years she was totally blind today she cherishes the images that she holds onto in her mind and the dreams she has in 20-20 vision. Since she was able to see for so long, she can visualize things quite easily.

Mrs. Middleton had three young children when she began having trouble with her vision. Her youngest was only two. "It was extremely frustrating," she said. 85-year-old Edna Parkin, blind since birth, often wonders if it would be better to have seen and lost vision than never to have seen at all. Her ability to get around in the kitchen always amazes all who visit her.

Mrs. Middleton said Mrs. Parkin has been an inspiration to her for years. Even before she lost her sight, she knew Mrs. Parkin and always marveled at how well she managed. She watched in awe as Mrs. Parkin deftly manoeuvred around her kitchen, preparing supper.
needs to hit the books, he explains. However, Tildesley's excuse for his absence is more convincing than those of most students—he spent September in Athens competing in the 2004 Paralympics. Tildesley swam five events at the 2000 Sydney games, bringing home one bronze medal for his first event, the 200m individual medley.

Four years later, this past September, Tildesley returned as a Paralympian, this time to Athens. He had matured and gained confidence as a swimmer and, at the wise old age of nineteen, was no longer the rookie on the team. Increasing the expectations for his performance were his successes between Sidney and Athens, when he competed in two world championship meets in Argentina and Quebec, cumulatively winning five gold medals and one silver.

Tildesley needs the basic assistance provided to all blind swimmers—for example, he must have a support person on deck at each end of the pool with a plastic stick with a foam pad to tap him on the head, giving him the signal to turn—but discouragement, he claims, has always rolled like water off his back.

Aiding him in his accomplishments to date, he names his parents and Terry Fox as a role model. "Everybody in their minds wishes they could be like that, be as courageous as that, and I've always been inspired by that story."

For Mrs. Parkin, one of the most difficult parts of being blind is having to rely on others to get around. It was especially tough as a youngster eager to explore the world. Now other people often forget about her blindness.

When she visits, her hosts will often turn the lights on in the bathroom for her. "I just say, 'Never mind the lights for me.' "

Vancouver, British Columbia

Excerpts from article by Alex Leslie, Features Edit

THE PARALYMPIAN

UBC undergraduate Donovan Tildesley, medalist at the 2000 Sydney and 2004 Athens Paralympics, remains grounded after a life in the water.

Now, in his third year at UBC, Donovan Tildesley, has competed in swimming at an international level, medaling at meets in Sydney, Quebec, Argentina and Athens. This would be an impressive accomplishment for any individual of Tildesley's age, but in his case is singularly exceptional, as Tildesley was born blind.

Tildesley who rests his hand on my elbow for guidance and carries a collapsible white cane tells me about his classes for the new term, among them two in German literature. After taking first term off, he
OTTAWA INVITATIONAL BLIND BONSPIEL

I have covered a multitude of stories over the 8 years I have been at The New RO. I have often been left impressed by an event or an athlete but never amazed. That was until I met many of the athletes who competed in the Canadian Council of the Blind’s Inaugural National Capital Blind Curling Bonspiel. I recall a phrase I once heard...“ordinary people doing extraordinary things”. This thought certainly represents the efforts of each and every curler. I was captured by the passion and zeal of the competitors no matter the end result on the scoreboard.

— Ken Evraire, The New RO, Ottawa, Ontario

Held from February 6th to the 12th the event was regarded as great success by the competitors and the volunteers, and made a valuable contribution to the commitment to increase public understanding –’a lack of sight is not a lack of vision’.

While media attention has not yet attained the level required to provide White Cane Week with the exposure a national public awareness event requires significant progress was made with this event. Particularly effective were the media links established between the players and the media from their home towns.

Monday, February 7th White Cane Week 05 was launched by Her Excellency Adrienne Clarkson at the Ottawa Curling Club. The Governor-General was introduced to the blind curlers and participated in the opening ceremonies of the Bonspiel. The ceremonial first stones were thrown by Ontario Women’s champion, Jenn Hanna, who is a member of the Ottawa Club, and Michael Hayes, a member of the Ottawa Blind Curlers Chapter and a competitor in the event.
Competition on the ice was intense as two rounds were played each morning, enabling all to play against each other. The east west rivalry that was anticipated by some never really occurred as by the last games on Wednesday it was clearly a western dominated competition.

Wednesday was the final day of the tournament; and after it was over the three podium teams were announced. Receiving bronze medalist was the Vancouver team, the silver medal went to Edmonton and gold medal to Kelowna.

During the tournament the players participated in a number events - some formal others more spontaneous. Among the formal events were the opening ceremony with The Governor-General spending time with each of the teams and a meet your MP evening in the West Block of the House of Commons.

Craig Turner has been blind since his early twenties yet he has been involved with urling for the last ten years, and he is a pretty good player. He says, ‘Playing the game requires a feel how to throw the rock and an understanding of the game. Before I throw I get a mental picture of where all the rocks are then I throw. I can't see down to the other end of the ice. I use the lines on the centre of the ice as my guide as I slide out with the rock. I sweep to and that helps me to read the ice.

Craig’s local team started slowly but improved greatly as the tournament continued. At the final banquet he was selected by the other players as the male all-star personality of the tournament.
Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna-Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Blind Curling Bonspiel, an event that is being held this week at the Ottawa Curling Club, has brought together some of Canada’s finest curlers from the west coast to the east.

The exciting tournament launches White Cane Week 2005, hosted by the Canadian Council of the Blind to raise awareness for the blind and visually impaired in Canada. The bonspiel is a testament to determination and self-sufficiency, proving that blind and visually impaired Canadians are equally active in their communities, equipped with many abilities, not disabilities.

I wish all the curlers, in particular the team from my constituency of Kelowna, a great week of competition and thank them for their efforts in raising awareness of the challenges facing the blind and visually impaired. What they may lack in sight, they do not lack in vision.
MEMBER PROFILES

Alistair Butt

Recognized in 2003 as an Ontario Junior Citizen of the year for his involvement in community services, Alistar Butt, has continued to contribute to improving the quality of life for the blind and visually impaired. A well-rounded student in academics, arts and athletics, he is also interested in promoting world peace, and has traveled extensively promoting this cause. As the junior White Cane Week ambassador Alistar participated in the ceremony that launched both the Week and the national Bonspiel.

Theresa Dupuis

You name it, Theresa does it — downhill or cross-country skiing, tandem-biking, pottery-making, snow-shoeing, cooking, playing the piano, horseback riding, reaching out to young students in schools, political involvement and social activities — she is busy at all twelve months a year. Theresa Dupuis’ resolve to be continuously engaged is only rivaled by her passion and her enjoyment of her collection of 85 pairs of shoes.

President of the Canadian Council of the Blind’s Ottawa chapter Theresa knows at first hand the importance of a supportive network of volunteers. Many persons in Ottawa appreciate her commitments to the community and are in awe of her capacity to give. April 27, 2004, Mayor Bob Chiarelli recognized Theresa’s contribution to the community by awarding her a Civic Appreciation Award for the Senior Citizen of the Year.

Did You Know?

- Every five seconds one person in the world goes blind. A child goes blind every minute.
- There are 45 million blind people and 135 million with low vision, totaling 180 million with significantly poor vision.
- 80% of blindness is avoidable (60% treatable, 20% preventable).
Terry Kelly

White Cane Week Ambassador

Terry does not consider his blindness a handicap. But the challenges presented to him and the path of life this Newfoundland native has chosen are by no means ordinary. Terry’s attitude has definitely determined his altitude. His ability to share his ups and downs while attacking all that life has to offer is one of the most moving experiences shared with audiences today.

A member of the Order of Canada Terry Kelly has performed around the world, produced four albums, won seven East Coast Music Awards, and has been nominated for four CCMA Music Awards and a JUNO.

Terry was a member of the Canadian Track Team that competed in the 1980 Para Olympics. He continues to run, swim, skate and bicycle.

Fred Beyer

A member of the BC Citizen’s Assembly of Maple Ridge, was born in Steinbach, Manitoba and has lived in B.C. since 1945. His commitment as a member of the Assembly, “to serve my province and my country” by finding “a model (of voting) that will serve B.C. better.” Fred retired from Fletcher Challenge Canada Ltd. in 1988. He had worked himself up from grader, tallyman and lumber inspector to sales manager. Fred is visually impaired and is a member of the Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows White Cane Club a chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind. Fred is also a member of Haney Presbyterian Church, the Maple Ridge Lions Club and the Ridge Meadows Seniors Centre. Fred enjoys woodworking, curling, five-pin bowling and golfing. He was member of the BC-Yukon curling team that finished third in the national blind curlers bonspiel.
Some 10 to 15 towns and cities officially proclaimed February 6th to 12th White Cane Week 2005.

**WHITE CANE WEEK**
February 6-12,2005

WHEREAS, this is the 59th year in Canada that the first week of February has been recognized as a public awareness program; and

WHEREAS, White Cane Week aims to create among Canadians a greater respect for the white cane as a symbol of independence, not dependence; and

WHEREAS, extending accessibility is essential to enabling those who lack sight, but not vision, achieve a reasonable quality of life; and

WHEREAS, this campaign reflects the changing circumstances of the blind and visually impaired and their families; and

WHEREAS, White Cane Week is a program of the Canadian Council of the Blind, "the voice of the blind"; and

WHEREAS, this campaign asks that barriers be removed and tools that increase accessibility be more widely utilised to enable blind and visually impaired Canadians lead full and meaningful lives;

THEREFORE, I, Bob Chiarelli, Mayor of the City of Ottawa, do hereby proclaim the week of February 6 - 12, 2005 as White Cane Week in the City of Ottawa.

Bob Chiarelli
Mayor

**SEMAINE DE LA CANNE BLANCHE**
Du 6 au 12 février 2005

ATTENDU QUE, au Canada, pour la 59e année, on reconnaît la première semaine de février comme une semaine de sensibilisation de la population;

ATTENDU QUE la Semaine de la canne blanche vise à susciter chez les Canadiens un plus grand respect pour la canne blanche, qui représente un symbole d’indépendance, et non de dépendance;

ATTENDU QU’il est essentiel d’améliorer l’accessibilité afin de permettre aux personnes privées de la vue, mais non de vision, d’avoir une qualité de vie raisonnable;

ATTENDU QUE cette campagne reflète l’évolution de la situation des personnes aveugles ou ayant une déficience visuelle, de même que de leur famille;

ATTENDU QUE la Semaine de la canne blanche constitue un programme du Conseil canadien des aveugles, qui est « la voix des aveugles »;

ATTENDU QUE, dans le cadre de cette campagne, on demande la suppression des obstacles et une utilisation plus répandue des outils qui améliorent l’accessibilité afin de permettre aux personnes aveugles et ayant une déficience visuelle de donner un sens à leur vie et d’en profiter pleinement;

PAR CONSÉQUENT, je, Bob Chiarelli, maire d’Ottawa, proclame par la présente la semaine du 6 au 12 février 2005 Semaine de la canne blanche à Ottawa.

Bob Chiarelli
Maire
SPONSORS

NATIONAL SPONSORS

Volunteers

The Canadian Council of the Blind, an organization governed by its blind and visually impaired members, salutes the many volunteers in communities across Canada who make White Cane Week and many other activities possible.

The volunteers greatly assist the Council in its commitment to the increased accessibility that will enable its community to attain the quality of life they seek.
From old-school craftsmanship to cutting-edge technology, FND Graphics Inc. has combined the best of both worlds to ensure that your printing projects are completed with unparalleled customer service, competitive pricing and timely delivery.

A proud supporter of the Canadian Council of the Blind