



BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE

Hello:

My name is Tobi Sather and I would like to take a moment to introduce myself to you and your family. The Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada (MDAC), British Columbia Paraplegic Association (BCPA) and the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of British Columbia (SBHABC) have hired me in the position of Youth Empowerment Facilitator. The purpose of this position is to oversee all activities for the **Bridges to the Future** project. I am hoping you have heard of the program but if you haven't, or if you need just a bit of a reminder, please allow me to explain.

Bridges is community-based resource developed to support youth with physical disabilities to overcome the challenges they face when moving to adulthood. This transition can be very difficult for the individual, his/her family, supporting systems and for the larger caring community. It is very important for all parties to know and explore all options/resources available to the youth to help them become active, contributing, valued members of their community as adults. This program allows youth the opportunity to dream and to meet personal goals such as living independently or working.

It is my job to motivate and support the youth as they begin thinking of their future goals and developing realistic personal plans. The areas I could possibly support youth are endless recognizing each individual is unique with their own set of skills, dreams and challenges. Some specific examples of where I may be able to help include:

- **Supporting youth become active participants of their community through activities such as recreation**
- **Skill Building, job training and employment counseling**
- **Volunteering**
- **Independent decision making**
- **Life skills**
- **Making Friends**

The wonderful thing about this project is that you will be able to voice your wants, needs and goals. Together we can seek out the resources and skills needed for you to be successful and celebrate your gifts to community.

The program will officially begin meeting with participants to develop personal plans in January 2003. Right now I am busy gathering all the needed resources so that I can serve you and your family in the best possible way. I am also looking for any youth with a physical disability, between the ages of 15 to 25, who are currently residing in British Columbia and would like to participate in this project. If you think this program can help you plan for your future, please contact me @ (604) 788-7124 or through e-mail @ tsather@bridgestothefuture.ca so we can find a time to meet and chat.

The eventual goal for the program is to support youth with physical disabilities throughout British Columbia. I am going to begin with the Lower Mainland in January 2003. I hope to be able to starting supporting youth in other regions by summer of 2003. If you are interested please contact me regardless of where you are in the province. This will really help me to determine which regions I will be able to accommodate.

I am very excited about this program and its endless possibilities and I look forward to hearing from you and your family.

Sincerely,

Tobi Rochelle Sather
Youth Empowerment Facilitator

