

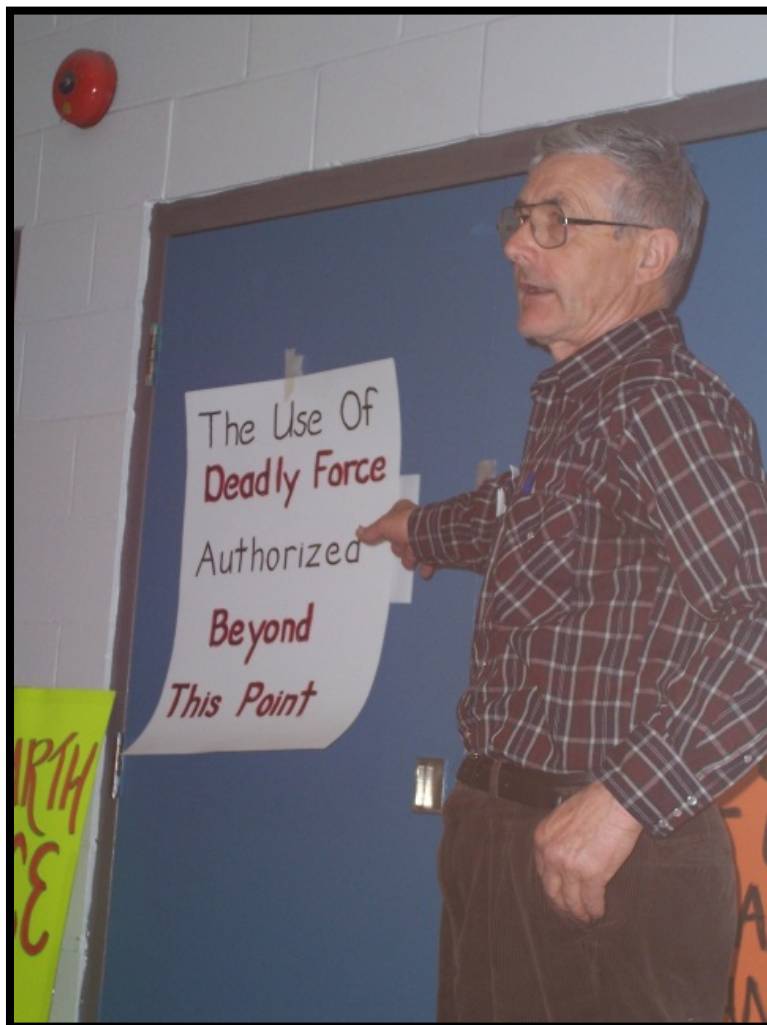
### **In This Issue:**

Al's Experience

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Meeting

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### Al Slater shows a sign seen in Fallujah, Iraq

Al Slater is currently a Member of the Board of Directors for Community Living St. Marys and Area.

### Christian Peacemaker Teams

Christian Peacemaker Teams is a program of Brethren, Quaker and Mennonite Churches and other Christians that support nonviolence.

CPT Reservist Allan Slater, who had just returned from Iraq, explains that the U.S. military authorizes use of deadly force in Fallujah. During this public presentation in Ottawa, Slater called for the U.S. to leave Iraq quickly.

Ottawa, Canada, March 19<sup>th</sup>. 2005

*(Printed with permission of: Christian Peacemaker Teams)*

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## SA'AD'S RESTAURANT

Our friend Sa'ad owns a restaurant just off Karrada Street in downtown Baghdad a couple of blocks from our apartment. When we meet with Iraqi colleagues in our apartment during the day we order take-out from Sa'ad. The restaurant is a community hangout. Just to the right of the entrance is the backgammon board, which is always in use. Next to that game sits a small table that is always left vacant as lunchtime nears. Every day about one o'clock a man comes in, sits at the table, and proceeds to have a silent but very animated conversation with a person that none of the rest of us can see. After a few moments a waiter brings him food although I have never seen the man place an order.

I long to know something about this man's story. He clearly lives in different world than I do. Iraq is a nation of people traumatized by years of violence, war and oppression. It is easy to imagine that he has suffered some terrible mental or emotional trauma. The man is well dressed, he appears to be happy and the staff and patrons of the restaurant treat him with respect. I know I could ask several people and hear their version of the man's story. But would that be his story? Why can't we establish relationships with people that we perceive as different?

I can only refer to this person as the man I saw in Sa'ad's restaurant. The man may be living a good life in another world or maybe he has needs that are not being met. Community Living seeks to improve the lives of people who are a little different. I hope we have learned to communicate directly with the people we serve.

Allan Slater

### Diversity workshop at Arthur Meighen

We often speak of a future where our community is naturally more inclusive and welcoming and yet how will we get there if we aren't working hard to create it today. That was the motivation behind a Diversity workshop that was sponsored by the St. Marys Community Planning Committee and put on at Arthur Meighen Public School on May 1, 2006. The two Grade 5 classes with about 50 kids in total heard some presentations from the Alzheimer's Society, the Cross Cultural Learner Society and Al Slater on his experiences in Iraq. Then it was time to get involved in some fun group activities such as a contest to come up with as many unique qualities each child had and how many things they shared with the group. There was also a station where the kids got to find out what it would be like to have a physical disability and do everyday tasks. The afternoon ended with local entertainer, Paul Behnke who does a musical presentation on bullying and inclusion. Sheila Greason and I were on the organizing committee and we were surprised at how wise and insightful these 10 year olds are. If you want to know more about the workshop or the Community Planning committee just let me know!

Jennifer Leslie

## Speak up!

*The Ministry of Community and Social Services wants to hear from individuals, families and community groups*

*About their recently released discussion document called Opportunities and Action.*

*It's available at our office or on the Ministry's website.*

*Join us on **Wednesday June 7th from 5pm - 7pm** to discuss Opportunities and Action.*

*A light dinner will be available.*

***Please call Marg McLean at 284-1400 x 225 to confirm your participation.***

*Notes from this discussion will form our agency's response to the Ministry.*

## Provincial News

Did you know? 2/3 of Canadian adults with disabilities lack one or more of workplace aids, home modification or other supports. In Oct 2005 Federal, Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Social Services agreed that the focus for achieving full inclusion will be joint with emphasis on improving access to and funding for support services and for income supports. People with disabilities are financially dependant on provincial/territorial governments, without help from the federal government new investments in disability and income supports will not happen. Since each level of government is responsible for different areas in the lives of people with disabilities co-operation is necessary to improve their living conditions. Perhaps less red tape and fewer levels of government and their ministries would assist everyone as well.

Cathy McCormick

## Resources

We've received some new resources at the agency. We're looking for anyone willing to do a short review of any or all of them for our next newsletter...

Video: Autism is a World.

A 40-minute CNN documentary on the life of a woman with autism.

Video: Messengers of Hope.

Jean Vanier talks from February 2006.

Video: Revel in the Light.

A short film on the life of a young woman living in community.

Book: Talking in Pictures and other reports from my life with Autism by Temple Grandin.

If you are interested in doing a short review of any of these resources for our next newsletter contact: Barb Leavitt at 519-284-1400 ext. 226.

## We've Come a Long Way

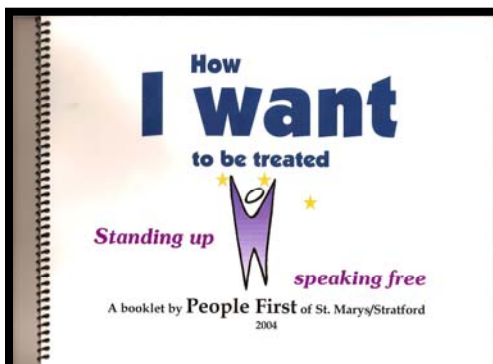
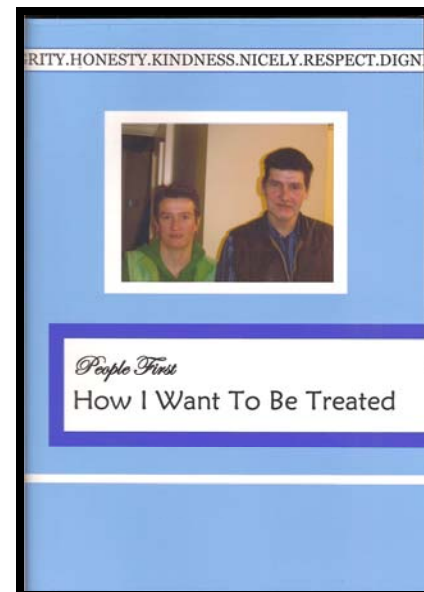
Richard Oliver submitted an article he has had in scrapbook for years. Here we see an article from June 15<sup>th</sup>. 1968. The strides that we have made in assisting individuals to embrace their place in their communities is incredible. We proudly look back so we can continue to look forward and progress towards our goals.

**Quote: "A community learns as people are present. It cannot learn if people are absent."**



Since 1988, our association has moved toward the replacement of all congregated, segregated services. We now provide support and services that enable people to participate in their community in a fully integrated manner. This involves all aspects of people's lives including where they live, learn, work and recreate.

(Obtained from Community Living website)



The book and DVD "How I want to be Treated" has been put out by People First of Stratford and St. Marys. Books are available for \$10 and DVD's for \$15.