

From Ginny's Desk by Ginny Gillen, Executive Director

Hope you all enjoyed the wonderful hot summer and that you had a chance to escape the heat by visiting one of our lovely city parks or better yet, experience Alberta's many holiday getaway sites. As you know from past newsletters, I am a member of the Northern Alberta Abilities Lodges (NAAL) committee. This summer the committee focused on several campgrounds surrounding Edmonton, encouraging each site to become accessible for individuals with disabilities. Our committee has been very encouraged by the response. However, camps need information about how to become disability-friendly, so as a committee we are trying to assemble more of this information. Having said that, the committee is pleased to announce that by September, Camp He Ho Ha at Pigeon Lake will have one disability friendly building (36" doors, drive-in shower, etc.). This is largely due to the efforts of Ross Wein, Chair of NAAL and Care-giver of a son recovering from brain injury. The committee is still pursuing our bigger project – a wellness centre at Blue Lake and we have just been notified by the government that there will be a call for proposals this fall. We are preparing to respond and would like the input of the brain injury community to do so. A questionnaire regarding your recreation, leisure interests as well as the challenges you face in accessing such programs is included with this newsletter. Please send this back to me. This information will be used to prepare presentations to government Ministers and as content for the upcoming response to the request for proposals.

As many of you know there have been some changes to the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Act and Regulations this year. A booklet, called Improving AISH, contains information about these changes and about the AISH program in general. This booklet is available through the NABIS Information Coordinator or through Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.

Another encouraging change concerning families affected by disability is the Federal Government's new Disabilities Savings Plan. Based on a report submitted to the Finance Minister in December of 2006, the Disability Savings Plan outlines the need

for a disability savings plan, a disability savings grant and a disability savings bond. Some benefits of the Registered Disabilities Savings Plan (RDSP) are: family members will be able to make financial contributions to relatives with disabilities, both during their lifetimes and upon their deaths, without penalty under provincial programs; the plan recognizes family's financial contributions with a tax incentive; the plan increases the standard of living and improves the quality of life of Canadians with disabilities; and, finally, the plan encourages future planning and self-reliance for Canadians with disabilities. The RDSP will be available starting in 2008. For more information visit the PLAN website at www.plan.ca.

BRAIN BASICS

Edmonton

**Led by Marianne Bobik,
NABIS Service Coordinator**

Sept. 17 & 18, 2007

Training for NABIS members,
volunteers and health care
personnel toward
family-focused care.

Fee \$200 Call **479-1757**

This summer NABIS entered into an agreement with the Ontario Brain Injury Association that will allow us to deliver an educational program developed by that organization. This two day workshop entitled 'Brain Basics' will provide members, volunteers and health care personnel with training and education that will improve their ability to provide family-focus care. Marianne Bobik, NABIS Service Coordinator, will work with the

OBIA Executive Director, John Kumpf, to deliver a fall workshop here in Edmonton. Marianne will then continue to offer this workshop on an as needed basis. The cost of the workshop is \$200.00 and the dates are September 17th and 18th. Please call Marianne for details at 479-1757.

For the second summer in a row, NABIS has hired summer students through the Federal Summer Employment program. This year all four offices – Edmonton, Edson, High Prairie and Grande Prairie have been ably assisted by these individuals. All have shown great initiative and have contributed in so many ways. The NABIS staff has tried very hard to provide a rich working experience for these students as we hope they are the non profit workers of the future. On the flip side, those of us who are permanent staff at NABIS have benefited by what they have brought: enthusiasm, knowledge, expertise and most of all, an 'anything is possible' attitude. Thank you so much Jeremy, Saabira, Jenna and Kristy.