

# what it's all about balance

BCITS  technology for living 

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## Emergency Training for Your Caregivers

**by Lily Cheung** | For Luke Melchior, safety has been hardwired into his daily routine for as long as he can remember. Luke uses mouthpiece ventilation during the day and sleeps with a full face mask on a BiPAP at night. He relies on his ventilator and BiPAP to support his respiratory demands, 24 hours a day.

Over the years, Luke and his wife Kayla have developed emergency drills that his caregivers undergo as part of their personalized training to work with Luke. On a recent home visit, he impressed upon me the virtues of emergency preparation.

During a power outage, Luke's BiPAP is rendered ineffective, so he requires an external battery source. In preparation for a power failure, Luke

Luke's bedside set up from top to bottom: bilevel unit, adhesive battery-operated light and external battery pack



has purchased an external battery which stays close to his bedside.

Emergency training for Luke's caregivers involves a mock power failure. To see the home environment in the dark, the caregivers start by turning on a battery-operated light fastened to the side of the night stand. The caregiver then carries out a sequence of tasks that involves transferring the AC plug from the wall outlet to the power pack, following the instructions conveniently labelled on the front of the battery pack, and powering it up. To gently remind his caregivers of the urgency of the situation, Luke times the drills.

Training for a power failure is all-encompassing; it includes a total equipment failure which gives Luke's caregivers an opportunity to practice their Ambu bagging skills. Luke wants his caregivers to be comfortable using an Ambu bag with him.

Through these simulated emergency situations, Luke's caregivers become acquainted with all parts of the emergency plan. His caregivers recognize the importance of these drills for Luke's safety and to minimize his distress.

Reflecting on these drills, Luke says, "There's nothing worse than waking up and having trouble breathing. It's a rude awakening. These drills give me peace of mind and an added sense of security, knowing that I can handle a power failure." ●

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## Handy Stuff to Have in Your Tool Box

BY SAMIKO GUEST, BIOMED TECHNOLOGIST

Have you ever wondered what on earth your Biomed Technologist is carrying inside their huge wheeled tool box? Besides our lunch, we have quite a variety of tools and materials that allow us to do quick and effective jobs on the spot. We would like to show some of the basic, handy gadgets we find helpful for our clients. If you have some of this “stuff”, you too can do emergency repairs and Macgyver a simple project with your creativity!

NOTE: Always read the product instructions for usage, specifications, and safety information.



### Nylon Cable Ties (Zap Straps)

This is a must-have item in our tool box. They are a cheap and easy way to hold objects together, and they're available in a variety of colours and sizes. Zap straps can be purchased at any hardware store, such as Home Depot or Canadian Tire.



### Tape

There are a variety of useful tapes available on the market. Two types that are especially useful for our technologists can be found at any hardware store.

**Double Sided Tape** We use “3M Exterior Two Sided Mounting Tape.” It is very secure and can be removed easily. Also, when it's removed, it doesn't leave any messy residue.



**Silicon Self Adhering Tape** This tape is made, of course, with silicon. To use it, you stretch the tape and wrap it around an object. It then fuses to itself and bonds objects. This tape can be used for many, many purposes: to stop liquid/gas leakage, to hold objects together, to add grips to tools, to insulate electrical wires,

to secure connections—it can even stop bleeding. This product is sold under a variety of names. The right product will include two key words on the packaging: “Silicon” and “Self-adhering.”



### Velcro

Velcro is a hook and loop material that sticks to itself, to join objects or hold them in place. There are many types of Velcro available, but we primarily use an industrial, heavy duty Velcro, called “Dual Loc” which can hold very heavy objects. It takes at least 24 hours to cure the adhesive on the Dual Loc. The downside of this product is it leaves messy residue when it is removed from the surface. Another great Velcro solution is the Velcro strap which is nice for wearable purposes (i.e. attaching a switch to your hand).



## Vinyl Bumpers

Vinyl bumpers are designed for protecting the surface of tables or furniture. We use these bumpers for anti-slipping and raised surface purposes. Vinyl bumpers can be found at any hardware store.



## Twist N' Stay

This is a thick, foam-padded wire that can be bent to any shape. It is handy to keep for a portable tablet or book stand, carrying hook, etc. You can Twist N' Stay online through [www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca) or [www.sears.ca](http://www.sears.ca).



## Loc-Line

Loc-Line is a ball and socket modular tubing system. It is very flexible and can be positioned, by hand, in a variety of shapes like a gooseneck. We use the Loc-Line system for mounting switches, remotes, smartphones, and so on. You can purchase Loc-Line online at E-H-Pope (Canada) and Modular Hose (USA).

When you buy Loc-Line hose and connector parts, don't forget to buy the assembly pliers. Also, Modular Hose carries useful accessories for the system, like mounting clamps and plates which can expand the possibilities of your project.

## Mounting Clamps

We carry different types of mounting clamps, in case we need to mount a switch, remote, phone, tablet or other objects on a wheelchair, bed rail, furniture, walker or scooter.

If you have some DIY projects, like a cup holder or umbrella holder on your wheelchair, you can buy a variety of reasonably priced mounting clamps at hardware stores or online. [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca) and [ebay.ca](http://ebay.ca) both have great selections. ●

## Door Opener Brings Huge Changes

**by mark stockbrocks** If anyone in a wheelchair is going to tell you that they're lucky, it'll be me!

I am a stroke survivor and I live in a "wheelchair accessible" apartment in Vancouver that is not entirely accessible to people like me who use wheelchairs.

A glaring example of a barrier to my home was that I wasn't able to enter without the assistance of an able-bodied person—which is never guaranteed. In addition to the challenges I have doing many tasks of daily living, not being able to get into my home on my own is a great restriction on my mobility and autonomy.

So, I was absolutely saved when TIL provided an automatic door opener that allowed me to enter my home independently. Maybe I was literally saved because I had no way of escaping my apartment, if there was a fire.

Thanks to TIL and the door opener, I'm now able to let my caregivers in, to help me with the many things I'm unable to do on my own.

Receiving the door opener has made vast improvements to my quality of life and I am forever indebted.

Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who have supported the door opener project that allows people more freedom, independence, enjoyment of life and self-esteem. ●

# balance

Balance is published three times a year by the BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS).

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## Client Satisfaction Survey 2015

The BCITS client satisfaction survey report summarizes the responses gathered in the questionnaires that were distributed to our 1020 clients in February 2015. It reflects some extremely positive results.

A high percentage of respondents awarded a very satisfied rating for overall services they have received. The positive evaluation, however, does not mean our work is finished.

One of our most important values in serving our clients is willingness to listen, and the survey received a wide range of comments and suggestions. Taken together, they constitute essential feedback which will be used to refine and improve our service.

Clients are telling us there are areas of our services that need improvement and further attention. The following are a few client suggestions.

- More information on programs and services that are available from BCITS
- Emergency planning with respiratory therapists or biomedical technologists
- More frequent visits or phone call follow-ups
- More detailed demonstration on equipment use and cleaning
- Enhanced access to adaptive technology for computers

If you need help with any aspect of our services, please contact us. We remain committed to sustaining the highest levels of service.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to every client who took the time to answer the survey questions. You have participated in an important initiative and provided us with vital information we need in order to serve you better. ●

### Client Comments

*"I wish all services for people with disabilities were run as effectively as yours. Keep up the good work"*

*"All visits have been professional, efficient, helpful and to my satisfaction"*

*"I would like to end this survey on a positive note. Any technician whether on the phone or in my home has always made me feel comfortable and they have always been polite and courteous. Thank you (everyone) for all your hard work and dedication."*

## The BCITS/Kinsmen Classic Golf Tournament

**by clara chalifour** | The weather on September 18, 2014 was gray and misty at Richmond's renowned Mayfair Lakes Golf and Country Club. If you arrived by noon, there was a sight to behold—men in red aprons, busily cooking away at the BBQ. These were the noble Kinsmen of Coquitlam cooking up a storm to feed volunteers and golfers, and having a blast!

Preparing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual BCITS/Kinsmen Classic Golf Tournament, we could sense the excitement and enthusiasm of our sponsors who were determined to help make this event a success, to raise money for the Open Doors Project.

One of our many supporters is Frank Nose, the Territory Manager for Stanley Security. Frank is an unpretentious family man, father, grandfather and lacrosse coach. Frank first worked for RE Phillips Ltd., a distributor for Stanley in 1998. After the passing of owner, Philippe Jannin, the business was sold to Stanley by Philippe's wife, Beate Breuers. The seed for the Open Doors Project was planted when a lump sum donation was given to establish the Philippe Jannin Fund to supply door openers for people with disabilities.

Frank installed Door Openers in both public buildings and private residences for many years. He realized that most able-bodied people gave no thought to the barrier a closed door can be for people with disabilities. When asked why he is so committed to helping the Open Doors Project, Frank said he feels he should give what he can and encourages others to do the same because "to whom much is given,

much is expected." Seeing people able to access their homes and other buildings without needing someone to assist them is reward enough, says Frank.

BCITS is again partnering with the Kinsmen Foundation in 2015 to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual BCITS/Kinsmen Classic Golf Tournament on September 17, 2015, at Mayfair.

The success of our golf tournaments is made possible through the support received from our many sponsors. Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, West Care Medical Ltd., for taking the lead to give back to the community.

The Open Doors Project provides electronic door openers for people with disabilities. Applicants must also be eligible for the BCITS Technology for Independent Living program.

If you or someone you know would like more information, please download both the TIL and Open Door Applications from <http://bcits.org/becomeclient.htm> or call 604-326-0175 to apply for a door opener.

The Kinsmen Foundation and BCITS provide many community services. Nationally, Kin Canada is currently helping Canadians with Cystic Fibrosis and, locally in BC, the aim is centered on helping people with disabilities.

BCITS works with people with severe physical disabilities and helps them to live as well and as independently as possible by providing equipment and assistive technology to assist with managing electronic devices in the home. ●



### support this event!

- Donations are gratefully accepted at [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org) (search for "BCITS")
- We are looking for golfers, volunteers and donations of cash and prizes. If you can help, please contact Clara at [cchalifour@bcits.org](mailto:cchalifour@bcits.org)
- Attend the BCITS/Kinsmen Classic Golf Tournament on September 17, 2015

## Automatic Door Openers

**by simon cox** | If you cannot open the door to your own home without assistance, you may be a candidate for our Open Doors Program. BCITS is now taking applications for this program. Many of our Technology for Independent Living (TIL) clients have high level disabilities and do not have the dexterity or mobility to open their own doors and are living on limited incomes. This can lead to dependency on others to help them leave or enter their home.

BCITS has long recognized this need and worked with organizations such as the BC Rehab Society, Provincial Gaming and the Kinsmen Rehabilitation Foundation to support the program through grants and fundraising activities, such as the BCITS/ Kinsmen annual golf tournament. We have been fortunate in our fundraising and are now able to provide door openers to many of our clients that demonstrate the greatest need.

If you feel you have a need for an automatic door opener, please apply using the form on our website at <http://bcits.org/becomeclient.htm>. You'll see you also need to apply for our TIL program, if you aren't already a client.

The Open Door Program application will review your eligibility for the program, but please know we will usually provide openers to those who demonstrate the greatest need. This support service is available throughout BC, so do not hesitate to apply if you live outside the lower mainland.

Please apply as soon as you can and we will do our best to help. ●

# help us fulfill our vision

BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.

You can help us continue this work through your donation. Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. 100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.

*Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001*

## I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- I enclose a cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will make a donation by credit card through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org). [Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at [www.bcits.org](http://www.bcits.org).]
- I would like to donate directly by VISA. I will call Clara Chalifour at 604-326-0175.

Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY & PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return form to: BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6**

# thank you for your support



## A Client's Thanks

My name is JoAnn Brekkaas. I have been the very appreciative recipient of equipment and care from both TIL and PROP for decades! In 1976, I was introduced to environmental control systems (ECS) at the GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre and they changed my life, as I am sure they changed many of your lives as well.

I became a quadriplegic at age 13 and was very limited in my abilities. Then, with ECS, overnight I gained an independence I hadn't known for over seven years. Being able to turn on the light, TV, fan and, best of all, use a phone independently was such a gift.

Over the years, the BCITS techs have added new equipment they felt would enhance my indepen-

dence. They also have been quick to make any necessary repairs.

PROP came into my life in 1995 when I was put onto a Bi-pap. The Respiratory Therapists are excellent and have been very good to me. For 20 years now, they have kept an eagle eye on my breathing needs and brought me updated equipment when I needed it. Thanks to everyone!

My mother used to recite poetry to us as children, especially on long winter evenings in the North Peace country where I grew up. She passed down to me her love of poetry and literature for which I am very thankful. I began writing down the poetry inside of me when I was a teenager. I hope you enjoy this little verse.

### Clouds

Clouds are made of wondrous stuff,  
Soft feathered strings and cotton fluff.  
Woven together with silver thread  
That lines each cloud, it's often said.  
Mix your breath from a frosty day  
With the wool of new born lambs at play.  
Add to this imagination  
And clouds become your own creation  
A pirate ship with billowed sail,  
A puppy dog that has no tail  
Whispered hopes, dreams untold  
Brushed with scarlet, edged with gold  
Opened eyes can truly see  
What clouds and life can really be,  
Open minds see past the fluff,  
A cloud... A life... Such wondrous stuff.

## Gadgets

### Modal Lightning Lighted Cable



**by wayne pogue** | The Modal Lighted cable, as with other lighted cables on the market, has lights embedded in the cable to simulate power flowing through the cable.

This simulated power flow allows the user to see when their phone is being charged (fast light flow), when the phone is almost charged (slow light flow), and when their phone is completely charged (lights off). At this point, the cable can be unplugged from the AC outlet to save power.

For TIL clients, being able to see when their phone is charged is difficult, as it is usually plugged in on a side table or kitchen counter. And it's left on all night consuming power.

Being able to easily see the charge status of their cellphone in the lighted cable flow allows the TIL client to switch the outlet off when charging is complete. The cable sells for \$30. ●



## Yes, I Accept Your Invitation to Join BCITS

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS) Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS:  
#103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6. Thank you.**

### Please Check One

- Membership for Registered BCITS Clients** Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- Non-client Membership** Please mail completed form along with \$20 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

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### Meet Our New RRT

by sherry shea

I have recently had the great fortune of becoming the

newest Respiratory Therapist at PROP. This is a great change in direction, after 17 years working in critical care at the University of Alberta in Edmonton (it's cold there!), St. Paul's Hospital and Lion's Gate Hospital, with a small detour through the Middle East (it's hot there!). I don't think I need to mention that BC is my favourite place to be (the temperature is just right!).

One of the best parts of being a Respiratory Therapist in all of these places has been the people I have met along the way: co-workers and the patients I have served. I have now met a few of you—clients of PROP—and I have been nothing short of impressed and in awe of what self-determination, teamwork and creativity can do.

Advocating for patients has been the most challenging and most rewarding aspect of my career. Self-determination is sometimes hard to come by in a hospital setting. It is always my pleasure to encourage and assist people to participate in their care and watch it be embraced. This is where the possibilities become endless.

When I'm not working, I like to get outside and enjoy nature. I also like to take really ugly pieces of furniture and turn them into (what I think is) a much better looking piece. I might be considered a bit of a documentary junkie as well.

Born and raised in the Lower Mainland, my heart is and always will be here in BC. I am so glad I have the opportunity to not only get out and travel as part of my work at PROP, but to meet some of the most amazing people that I would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet. How lucky am I?

I am looking forward to meeting all of you! ●