

Rise Above Barriers

Plan to Reach Everest Base Camp

November 2007

Version 2



Mount Everest from Gorak Shep

This document is a work in progress. It has been written for two reasons.

- To serve as a springboard for dialogue among the project's coordinators, team members, and supporters.
- To ensure that we've thought of everything since the devil is in the details.

Any input is greatly appreciated to ensure we consider every detail. Please feel free to contact me at the information outlined below.

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Trekking Trail to Everest Base Camp

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The Dream

As long as I can remember my mother has wanted to trek in the Nepal Himalaya. In the late 80's, she got us our shots and decided we were going to Nepal. Ok, so Pip's idea of planning is finding a place on the map and buying a ticket! That's why we didn't make it to Nepal and ended up having a two-year 'working holiday' in New Zealand. Unfortunately between then and now she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and has been terrorizing Collingwood and Victoria in her power wheel chair!!

As many of you know, Pip is not one to sit back and let life pass her by, especially with MS. Even though the mountains in Collingwood are smaller than those in British Columbia and Nepal, Pip was determined to 'trek' her way up Osler Bluff every day during lunch. This continued even after she was diagnosed with MS with each climb up Osler becoming more and more like a trek up Everest. She went through various canes and walkers and fortunately had many great friends that were her 'Sherpa'. At times, to descend she was dragged down the service road on a raincoat!

Pippa is always ready to take on a new adventure as long as she has her commode and a couple of beanbags to keep her warm! She got me sky diving lessons for my birthday with one stipulation that she could come along! Most recently, she visited Africa 'On Safari with 2 Wheelchairs and a Bucket'.

Finally after a few years of idle threats and random planning (the apple doesn't fall far from the tree), we have decided to take on the Nepal Himalaya this November (2007).

Nepal here we come!

Ollie and Jasper Blake



The Boys hiking with their Mum!

Rise Above Barriers Society

To facilitate the planning of our expedition to Everest Base Camp, it became evident in the early stages that we needed to become incorporated as a Society under the British Columbia Society Act to access the support we need to ensure our adventure is a success. This will also allow us to leave a legacy after our trip for others. This is important since we relied heavily on the experience of previous expeditions in our planning.

By researching, planning and executing a trekking journey in the Nepal Himalaya for a person living with a disability, Rise Above Barriers Society aspires to:

- Leave a blueprint of the journey to assist those who come next;
- Purchase a TrailRider to donate to Recreation Integration Victoria (RIV);
- Raise awareness about accessibility and MS;
- And motivate others living with disabilities to pursue similar outdoor adventures.

The goal and objectives of Rise Above Barriers Society will evolve as the organization develops and sets its long-term direction.

More information about Rise Above Barriers Society and its journey to Everest Base Camp can be found at www.riseabovebarriers.com.

Nepal & Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya – Mt. Everest Base Camp

Mt. Everest is situated in the Himalaya range on the border between Nepal and China. The official Nepali name for the mountain is Sagarmatha, meaning 'Head of the Sky'. At 8,848 metres above sea level it is the highest mountain on Earth. Every year scores of climbers take their chances trying to climb to the top of the world 'because it is there'.

In 1924, George Mallory and Andrew Irvine made an attempt to summit Mt. Everest. They never returned and it is debated whether they made it to the top. Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay made the first successful climb in 1959. As of 2006, 2,062 individuals have made 3,050 successful ascents of Mt. Everest with a total of 203 climbers losing their lives on the mountain.

Trip Itinerary

Lhakpa Dorji, our Guide has developed the trip itinerary based on the special needs of our group. He has taken a 14 day Tea House Trek and spread it over 21 days since we will be moving slower with the TrailRider than regular trekkers. We are not able to travel to Nepal prior to the expedition to complete a test trip so some details will need to be addressed once we are in Kathmandu.

Duration: 21 days

Grade: Challenging

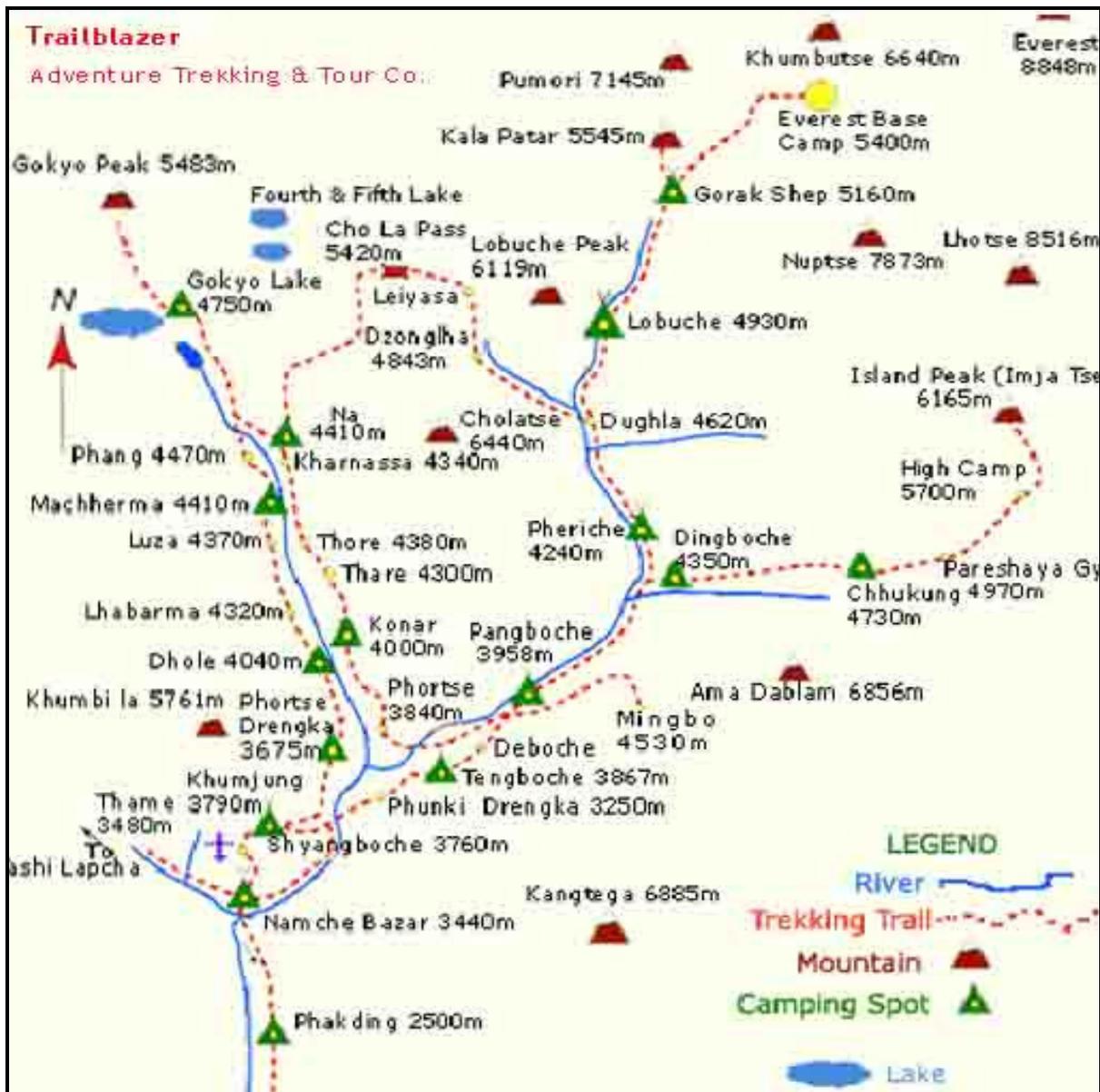
Trek type: Lodge (Tea House) Trek

Elevation: 2800m (min); 5550m (max)

Distance Covered: approximately 8 to 10 kilometers per day

Day 1	Fly to Lukla (2850m) from Kathmandu and trek to Phakding (2650m)
Day 2	Phakding (2650m) to Monjo (2850m)
Day 3	Monjo (2850m) to Namche Bazar (3440m)
Day 4	Rest day in Namche Bazar (3440m) with day trip to view Mt. Everest
Day 5	Namche Bazar (3440m) to Kengjuma (3750m)
Day 6	Kengjuma (3750m) to Tengboche (3860m)
Day 7	Tengboche (3860m) to Pangboche (3900m)
Day 8	Pangboche (3900m) to Dingboche (4350m)
Day 9	Rest day in Dingboche (4350m)
Day 10	Dingboche (4350m) to Dughla (4600m)
Day 11	Dughla (4600m) to Lobuche (4900m)
Day 12	Lobuche (4900m) to Gorak Shep (5250m)
Day 13	Rest day in Gorak Shep (5250m) with day trip to view Mt. Everest at Kalapatthar (5545m)
Day 14	Rest day in Gorak Shep (5250m) with day trip to Everest Base Camp (5300m)
Day 15	Gorak Shep (5250m) to Dughla (4600m)
Day 16	Dughla (4600m) to Pangboche (3900m)
Day 17	Pangboche (3900m) to Tengboche (3850m)
Day 18	Tengboche (3850m) to Namche Bazar (3450m)
Day 19	Namche Bazar (3450m) to Phakding (2650m)
Day 20	Phakding (2650m) to Lukla (2850m)
Day 21	Fly back to Kathmandu (1350m) from Lukla (2850m)

The team will spend 2 to 3 nights prior to and after the trek in Kathmandu at the Kathmandu Guest House (www.ktmgh.com/kgg/garden.php), which is wheelchair accessible and came highly recommended. This will allow us to rest after two long days of travel, complete final tasks for the trek and team build. The schedule of activities in Kathmandu will be determined in the near future based on the needs of our group and the requirements of our trekking guide. We are beginning our trek to Mt. Everest Base Camp on November 2nd with team members arriving in Kathmandu no later than October 31st. The earliest possible date for team members to travel home will be on November 24th.



Map of the Trek through Everest Region

This map outlines our trek with the majority of the resting spots captured. We will be trekking to Gorak Shep to access Mt. Everest Based Camp and travelling back to Lukla on the same trail. There is an alternate route back to Namache Bazar through Cho Lo Pass. This is an option that we will explore with our guide to experience another area of the region once we reach Everest Base Camp. It will be based on our capabilities as a trekking team and our time constraints.

It is important to note that this trek is focused on the team's journey to Everest Base Camp with Pippa. Our itinerary may change on route depending on the team's movement through the terrain. It is easy to change travel plans while on trek in Nepal Himalayas and we will access this once we begin the process.

Budget

This section is an estimate of the costs to trek to Everest Base Camp by Team MS Fits. We plan to minimize these costs by generating resources for the trip through fundraising, applying for grants and also by means of corporate support; though each member is responsible for his or her own costs if this does not become a reality. Based on the estimates, the trip will cost between \$3500 and \$4500 per team member depending on the price of air travel.

The price per person for a 21 day Tea House Trek in the Everest Region

2 to 3 People	\$50 (US\$)/day	\$1050 (US\$)/person/21 day trek
4 to 7 People	\$45	\$945
7 to 10 People	\$40	\$840
11 and above	\$35	\$735
Cost for Pippa	\$120 to \$150	\$2520 to \$3150

The cost per day for Pippa will depend on the number of porters that need to be hired to address her specific needs that includes additional gear that needs to be carried. This will be determined when we arrive in Kathmandu and meet our guide. His estimation is \$120 (US\$) to \$150/day. Our goal is to have our team move with Pippa along the trek, which will minimize the number of porters we will need to hire.

The price includes the Guide, porters, three meals a day in lodges, accommodation in lodges, hot beverages like tea and coffee and national park entrance fees. Extras that are not included in price are transportation in Kathmandu, hotel in Kathmandu valley, airport tax, air ticket between Lukla and Kathmandu, any alcoholic beverages and cold drinks (i.e. cola and bars), personal insurance and any other personal expenses (i.e. tips).

Additional Costs per Person

Airport Tax (2 way)	\$10 (US\$)
Domestic Air Ticket to Lukla (2 way)	\$200 (US\$)
Accommodation in Kathmandu	\$120 (US\$) (\$20/night)
Entry Visa	\$30 (US\$)
Flight (Vancouver to Kathmandu – round trip)	\$2500 (CDN\$)
Cancellation Insurance	\$100
Inoculations	\$100
Total Additional Cost per Person	\$3060
Total Cost per Person (including trek cost)	\$3795
Total Cost for Pippa (including trek cost)	\$5580

Estimated Costs for Team MS Fits Journey

TrailRider	\$5000
Total Cost for Team (15 members)	\$56925
Total Cost for Pippa	\$5580
Nepal Project Coordinator	\$10000
Additional Costs	\$5000
Estimated Total Costs	\$82505

Contributions to Rise Above Barriers Society will first be used to purchase the TrailRider. The funds will then go towards supporting Team MS Fits since the trek to Everest Base Camp is a significant financial commitment for each member and Pippa cannot complete the journey without them. Rise Above Barriers Society will first cover the team's costs in Nepal and then distribute additional funds to individuals to alleviate flight costs. Additional contributions will be donated to a program administered by the Capital Region Chapter of the MS Society that is important to Pippa; it allows people living with MS to purchase needed aids they cannot afford.

Rise Above Barriers Society has arranged with Victoria Integration Society to collect all donations made to the organization and provides tax receipts. Victoria Integration Society is a registered charity with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency under the Income Tax Act. **Cheques should be made payable to Victoria Integration Society re: Rise Above Barriers and sent to Recreation Integration Victoria, 4135 Lambrick Way, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8N 5R3.**

Guide

We are currently working with Lhakpa Dorji Sherpa who operates Khumba Adventures with his wife Lhakpa Doma to organize our trek through the Nepal Himalaya. Lhakpa Doma will meet us at the airport and ensure that we are comfortable in Kathmandu. Lhakpa Dorji will assist us in our expedition to Everest Base Camp.

Lhakpa Dorji has developed our trip itinerary taking into consideration the special needs of our group. We are working closely with Lhakpa Dorji to ensure he is aware of our needs and our itinerary might change depending on future conversations. We are relying on the information provided by other adventures including CORD's climb over Mount Kilimanjaro and the reclaiming of the West Coast Trail by the Standing Spirit Project to guide our planning. We will also be testing the TrailRider on numerous hikes this summer (2007) to practice and determine the specific needs of our team to incorporate into our plan (more details about our summer activities below).

More information about Khumba Adventures, Kathmandu and trekking in Nepal is available at www.khumbuadventures.com. Khumba Adventures came highly recommended to us through family friends that were introduced to Lhakpa Dorji and Lhakpa Doma by a doctor who worked in Nepal for 15 years.



Guide Lhakpa Dorji with a porter on the right and a woman from his Village on the left.

Equipment

Our most important piece of equipment for this trip will be the TrailRider available through the British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS) in Vancouver. The TrailRider is designed specifically to allow people living with disabilities to gain access to the wilderness. It has assisted individuals to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and traverse the West Coast Trail. For our expedition, it will be the main mode of transportation for Pippa to travel to Everest Base Camp.

The TrailRider is built using lightweight aluminium and resembles a wheelbarrow and rickshaw with handles at the front and back to allow it to be pushed and pulled at the same time. Tethers can be extended from the front and back handles to control the speed of travel. A large tire allows it to roll easily over rocky, rough terrain, tree roots and through streams. The vehicle also has a hand-operated, lightweight disc brake system located on the rear handles to control its speed. We will be using the Black Diamond model, which is the lightest, most heavy-duty unit and folds up the smallest; it will meet our needs on the trail and also during air and land travel. For more information about the TrailRider please visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/bcmos/index.html.



Since the Black Diamond model of the TrailRider is only available in Vancouver, Rise Above Barriers Society has decided to purchase one to practice and use for our Himalaya trek. The model available in Victoria through Recreation Integration Victoria is too bulky and heavy to transport to different trails in the Victoria area and to Nepal. After the trek, Rise Above Barriers Society will donate the TrailRider to Recreation Integration Victoria to enable children and adults living with disabilities on Vancouver Island to experience wilderness, parks and vacation spots with their friends and family members.

After a couple of practice hikes with the TrailRider, it was decided that modifications to the TrailRider were necessary to make it easier to move by the team members. This includes changes to the handles for both the pusher and puller to make them easier to grasp, eyes added to attach ropes and tethers and adding an additional brake to the wheel. A volunteer with Tetra Society is working to address the group's requests.

There is additional equipment we are currently pursuing using on the trek, which includes a carrying device created for the Standing Spirit Project to allow Pippa to travel over terrain unsuitable for the TrailRider. The device is composed of two harnesses, one of which Pippa can wear on days we know it will be needed. The carrier puts the other on and they are joined together to carry Pippa. The members of the Standing Spirit Project found the device easy to use. The porters can also carry Pippa in a basket. This is how injured trekkers are moved through the Himalaya though the harness will be more comfortable and easy to use for Pippa.

We are also trying to find a manual wheelchair that is light, heavy duty and will fold up small to bring on the trek. This will give Pippa something different to sit in at night or when we are on our rest days. There are units in the market that will fit our needs and further adjustments can be made to make it even lighter.



The TrailRider moving over various terrain in the Victoria area with the help of its 'Sherpas'.

The Team

Without a strong team of individuals to trek with Pippa to Everest Base Camp, this expedition will not be a success. A group of individuals have been handpicked who we feel will be perfect on Team MS Fits; this is based on their personality and skills to fill certain roles on the team. Most of the team has been finalized with a few individuals deciding if they can commit the time in Nepal. This trip is both a financial and time commitment for every member and each has made special concessions to make the journey. We hope to be able to assist each team member with the cost of the trek by raising funds. Members need to be prepared to be responsible for all their costs if we cannot fill this commitment prior to or after the event.

Beyond the trek through the Nepal Himalaya, each member is involved in the practice hikes to ensure the team and Pippa is prepared to reach Everest Base Camp. This involves day hikes throughout the summer and fall and a multi day trek that might take us to the top of Mount Albert Edward in Strathcona Provincial Park on Vancouver Island. Team members are also taking on additional roles including leading the hikes, preparing the TrailRider for the trek, designing and hosting Rise Above Barriers Society's website and ensuring Pippa is physically prepared for the trip with an exercise program.

We quickly realized that Team MS Fits reaches beyond those that will be making the journey to Nepal with Pippa and includes a large support network that are working behind the scenes to ensure our journey is a success. Their roles are endless and include: hiking with Pippa to practice for the trek, fundraising, assisting with sponsorship and modifying the TrailRider.



Team MS Fits, friends and family at the top of Mount Finlayson in Victoria.



Team MS Fits, friends and family after circumnavigating Victoria's Thetis Lake.

Preparing Pippa for the Trip

We are very concerned about keeping Pippa warm during the expedition since MS has affected her circulation. She will be wearing a warm down sleeping bag while riding in the TrailRider and we are currently pursuing various options to waterproof the bag. Throughout our trek we will be passing tea houses where boiling water will be available every hour or two, so we will use hot water bottles to add even more warmth. We are beginning the trek as soon as possible in November to take advantage of travelling through the warmest part of the month.

Due to MS, Pippa fatigues easily. We have designed the itinerary to ensure we can have extra rest if need be. Travel in the Everest Region of the Nepal is flexible, so we can easily make changes on route to ensure Pippa does not get too tired. We will have to ensure she can have a rest every afternoon by doing the majority of our travelling in the morning when she has the most energy.

It is very tiring to ride in the TrailRider as the passenger is constantly adjusting as it moves over the terrain. Pippa is working with a physiotherapist who has designed a fitness program including cardio and strength training to ensure she is strong for the trip. She is singing in a choir to improve her lung and core strength and participating in classes offered through the MS Society's Chapter in Victoria such as ball exercises and aquatic exercises. The practice hikes in the TrailRider are also an important component of Pippa's training schedule.

We will be relying on the experience of previous passengers of the TrailRider to address other issues that concern Pippa about the trip. Hopefully by practicing with the TrailRider this summer we can work out a routine that will work for Pippa and the team in Nepal prior to departure.



Pippa lifting her weights in the Garden after riding her bike.

Pre-trip Preparation

It is going to be important to leave for Nepal at the end of October as prepared as we can be for the trek. This will require practicing this summer and fall as a team to safely and efficiently move with Pippa in the TrailRider. Team communication between the movers, rider and other team members will need to be honed due to the size of the apparatus and the challenging, rough terrain it is moving over. We have quickly figured out that modifications to the TrailRider are needed to make it easier to move, which will be incorporated, practiced with and changed until they meet our needs. This includes having the actual rider set up to fit Pippa to ensure she is comfortable though currently she feels very content and relaxed using the TrailRider to hike.

Originally we thought we would use the day hikes and Access Challenge (multi day hiking event) organized by BCMOS to practice, but given that they are located in Vancouver these were quickly too hard to access from Victoria. Currently, there is a great group of hikers in Victoria that are taking Pippa for day hikes in the area. This group includes members of Team MS Fits, family and friends. Thus far they have circumnavigated Thetis Lake, explored East Sooke and reached the summit of Mount Finlayson; these are all places that Pippa has not been able to experience until now. These practice hikes are being made possible through the purchase of a TrailRider by Rise Above Barriers Society. Without the TrailRider in Victoria it would be difficult for Team MS Fits to prepare to reach Everest Base Camp.

A multi day hike will be necessary to practice moving over multiple days as a group. Currently we are exploring the option of reaching the summit of Mount Albert Edward in Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. We can access the mountain through the Forbidden Plateau at Mount Washington. We would hike in the first day and set up a base camp; the trails in the plateau are well marked and there is little change in elevation to the base camp. The second day we would summit Mount Albert Edward and then return to the base camp. We would hike out the final day.

Some team members will not be able to join us during these summer practice sessions due to other commitments or where they live. We will pick dates and locations that will suit the majority.

Contingency Plan

Numerous things can happen between now and November. We are considering these different issues and plans of action in case they come to fruition.

The political climate in Nepal has been a question for trekkers for many years. Currently the situation is stable, but very volatile and can change with no or little warning. There is talk of elections in Nepal this November and December which could affect the current stability. We have decided to continue with our plan to trek to Everest Base Camp this November. All members of Team MS Fits understand the potential dangers involved in trekking in Nepal and they are prepared for the consequences of the trip. This includes having to cancel the trip or return to Canada early if the political situation changes when we are in Nepal. We are not prepared to take unnecessary risks, but we are prepared to plan to reach Everest Base Camp and make changes as required. All members have been encouraged to purchase insurance to cover changes in the trip based on the political climate. They are also keeping informed of the situation by visiting the website for the Canadian Embassy in Nepal:
http://www.cconepal.org.np/registration_for_canadians.htm

Another concern is if members of the team will be affected by the altitude on the trek. Sometimes people on organized treks will ignore the symptoms of altitude sickness to keep up with the group. The trekking itinerary for our group takes a 14 day trek and spreads it over 21 days. We should not have an issue with altitude because we will be moving slowly. We are prepared to rest for additional days on route if someone has symptoms.

Important Websites

These are important websites to our current planning for the expedition. We will hopefully be adding more as we continue along this journey.

Khumbu Adventures – www.khumbuadventures.com

Kathmandu Guest House - www.ktmgh.com/kgh/garden.php

British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS) –
www.disabilityfoundation.org/bcmos/index.html

Disability Foundation – www.disabilityfoundation.org

Tetra Society of North America - www.tetrasociety.org

Climbing over Restriction and Disability Society (CORD) – www.cordclimbs.ca

Vertical Challenge – www.verticalchallenge.org

Standing Spirit Project (SSP) – www.standingspirit.com

Video from the SSP – www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUsJfT-mMCI and
www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV4WVl5Wcrs

British Columbia Association for Community Living – www.bcacl.org

Kripples in the Kumboo – www.isu.edu/cwhog/kumboo/index.html

Recreation Integration Victoria – www.rivonline.org

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada – www.mssociety.ca
Capital Region Chapter (Victoria) –
chapters.mssociety.ca/default.aspx?ChapterID=701&L=2

Canadian Embassy in Nepal –
www.cconeal.org.np/registration_for_canadians.htm