



Multiple
Sclerosis
Society of
Canada

Société
canadienne
de la sclérose
en plaques



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On May 3rd 2010, the Sherwood Park MS Awareness Committee organized a public presentation for May MS Awareness Month, as well as had Councillor Roxanne Carr, and Mayor Cathy Olesen accept an MS Challenge. The event started at 1:00pm. at Broadmoor Lake. In attendance was Mayor Cathy Olesen, Councillor Carr, Councillor Bidzinski, a number of community members, MS Society staff, Sherwood Park MS Awareness Committee, members of the Sherwood Park Community Group, and representatives from various media organizations. The formal presentations commenced with Laraine Hirsekorn of the Sherwood Park MS Awareness committee welcoming members of the community. Mayor Cathy Olesen spoke first and shared words of support, as well as publically shared the May MS Awareness Month Proclamation. Dr. Garry Wheeler VP of the Edmonton and Capital Region then shared words of welcome and support from the MS Society. Roxanne Carr spoke next about her commitment to the MS Challenge, and hope for increased awareness of challenges of living with MS.



After the formal presentations took place, the MS Challenge began. Mayor Cathy Olesen, and Roxanne Carr both sat down in wheelchairs, and wheeled outside, where they participated in a challenge where they had to wear goggles that limited their vision, and made everything look fuzzy (which simulated vision lose, and dizziness, that some MS patients experience), as well as gloves on their hands (simulating numbness, again, which some MS patients experience). With these challenges Mayor Olesen, Carr, and Hirsekorn (committee representative), had to try and throw a ball into a hula hoop that was on the ground. The limitations certainly made it difficult to make the shot.



Next up on the challenge was to navigate down a ramp that allowed one to access Broadmoor Lake. In navigating the ramp the Councillor and Mayor experienced the steep incline, and sharp corners, and the strength that it takes to slow yourself when going down the ramp, as well as the effort it takes to get back up the ramp. At this stage the media representative did interviews with Councillor Carr, Laraine Hirsekorn, and Cassy Lawson (MS Society). Mayor Cathy Olesen departed at this stage of the Challenge. The rest of the group then travelled to Sherwood Park Mall. The Mall had been informed of the Challenge, and a few of the businesses were specifically expecting a visit from us in the afternoon.



The second leg of the Challenge began at the Strathcona County Library. The library staff gave Councillor Carr a tour of the facilities, and shared with her, and the group some of the features of the library including accessible washrooms, open spaces to maneuver through out the library, and an Assistive Station which is equipped with a height-adjustable desk and large monitor, a BigTrack trackball mouse, a large keys keyboard, and ZoomText software. She also shared some details of the new library facilities that are being built as part of the new Strathcona County Community Centre.



Next the group continued to the elevator to navigate up to the second floor of the mall. Larine and Councillor Carr were able to fit into the elevator together. Some of the other participants had to wait for a turn on the elevator, while others were able to take the escalator up. On the second floor participants went into Suzy Shier to navigate through the store, tried looking at clothing, as well as entered the change rooms. There was room for Roxanne Carr, and a helper in the change room, but comments were shared with Suzy Shier staff that it would be nice to have a bench bolted down in the change room to support someone who was transferring out of a chair to try on clothing. Next stop in the mall was to travel down to the other end of the mall, and visit Chapters. There was one stop along the way which allowed Roxanne Carr to visit the accessible facilities of the Sherwood Park Mall. As well, Councillor Carr explored the food court, and identified that there were a number of immovable table/chairs that were part of the food court. The group also identified that there were tables that had moveable chairs that we made up the outlying row of tables.

Before arriving at Chapters, Councillor Carr visited the ramp to Galaxy Theatres. She worked her way up the ramp, and then let herself go back down the ramp, without pushing she noticed how much speed she picked up, due to the incline.

The next to last stop for Sherwood Park Mall, was Chapters. Roxanne Carr navigated through the isles, and acknowledged the levels of book shelves, and noticed when some of the shelves were out of her reach. Upon approaching the Starbucks in the store Roxanne had to negotiate some sharp corners, and be careful of the displays.

The last stop was to visit the Administration office of Sherwood Park Mall. Mall administration had been very receptive to participating in the MS Challenge, and so Roxanne Carr took a few minutes to share with administration staff what kinds of observations had been made during the time at the mall.

At the end of the afternoon, Councillor Carr, and participants of the day travelled to Salisbury Greenhouse to end off the Challenge with a reception with coffee, juice, and cookies donated by the Greenhouse.