



DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH
Make a *wave* from coast to coast

MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA SURDICÉCITÉ
Créez une *vague* d'un océan à l'autre

JUNE IS DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Organizations providing services for Canadians who are deafblind joining global efforts to raise awareness

TORONTO, ON – May 24, 2021 – Members of the deafblind community are joining a global awareness campaign to build awareness about people who are deafblind and engage in “yarn bombing” or tactile art installations across Canada through the month of June.

Yarn bombing is an activity that takes knitted, crocheted or loomed pieces of yarn and attaches them to objects or structures in public places as a form of street art to build awareness.

With June designated as National Deafblind Awareness Month across Canada, individuals who are deafblind, friends, families and knitting and crocheting clubs across Canada are joining Deafblind International networks to build awareness on a virtual scale. June is the birth month of Helen Keller, one of the most internationally recognized people with deafblindness.

At a time with many of us are experiencing increased feelings of isolation, for the over 1% of Canadians who are deafblind, the pandemic has had an even stronger effect by placing limits on their efforts to communicate, whether it is to express themselves, engage with their social networks or even participate actively in their communities.

Yarn bombing has been a unique way to connect people virtually to express themselves through their yarn creations and share their efforts on social media.

Penny Leclair, Co-Chair of the NDBAM Committee adds, “yarn bombing is a safe way to draw public attention to our awareness efforts, especially those who do not know anything about deafblindness.”

“It is my hope to motivate other people who are deafblind to get involved in bringing awareness of our needs and abilities to the public. I am always looking for ways to make others more aware of what life is like for Canadians who are deafblind,” says Penny, a member of three boards of directors; Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind, CNIB Deafblind Community Services, and Barrier-Free Canada - Canada Sans Barrières.

To help spread awareness, community objects and landmarks across Canada will be yarn bombed throughout the month of June. This initiative symbolizes the coming together of people in the field of deafblindness with the goal of sparking conversations with Canadians about the experience of and need for appropriate services for individuals who are deafblind.

Landmarks across Canada will also be lit up in blue to commemorate June as National Deafblind Awareness Month.

The experience of being deafblind A person who is deafblind experiences a combined vision and hearing impairment of such severity that it is hard for the impaired senses to compensate for each other. Thus, deafblindness is a distinct disability,” (<http://www.wfdb.eu/what-is-deafblindness/>). The combination of which results in significant difficulties in accessing information and in pursuing educational, vocational, recreational and social goals. A person who is deafblind experiences life in a unique way, separate from the way a person who is only blind or only deaf may experience. An individual who is deafblind requires specialized services, including adapted communication methods.

ABOUT INTERVENORS Intevenors are professionally trained to provide auditory and visual information to people who are deafblind. Acting as the eyes and ears, an intervenor provides complete information about the environment and surrounding circumstances to the person who is deafblind who is unable to obtain this information for themselves because of a dual sensory loss. By using various methods of communication, they provide opportunities for people who are deafblind to gain independence, pursue goals, have control over their lives/make choices and interact with the environment. Additional information is available at (insert link to website).

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National Deafblind Awareness Month Working Group A collaboration of individuals who are deafblind, service providers, and advocacy groups celebrating the achievements and contributions of people who are deafblind each June. The objective of the National Deafblind Awareness Month Working Group is to raise awareness about the part of the population who are deafblind and the importance of equitable access to consistent Intervenor Services. Together, we can break down barriers that people who are deafblind face in their daily lives.

Bob Rumball Centres of Excellence
Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC)
Canadian Deafblind Association – National
Canadian Deafblind Association – New Brunswick
Canadian Deafblind Association – British Columbia
Canadian National Society of The Deaf-Blind (CNSDB)
CNIB Deafblind Community Services

DeafBlind Ontario Services
Deaf-Blind Planning Committee
Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille
Intervenor Organization of Ontario (IOO)
Manitoba Deafblind Association
Resource Centre for Manitobans Who Are Deaf-Blind (RCMDB)
Sensity Deafblind & Sensory Support Network of Canada

Media Contact:

Karen Madho, Co-Chair of Working Group

k.madho@deafblindontario.com

905-853-2862, ext. 243