

Monthly Newsletter

CONNECT4LIFE

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March 2025



**This Month in Advocacy:
Connect4Life
Increasing Connections**



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Queen's Park Update: Looking Out for You
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Charity Contact

Connect 4 Life: The Podcast Launches New Series

Growth, especially beyond national borders, affects every aspect of the operations of any organization, whether in the private or public sectors. No department or activity is immune to the ripples of growth.

This is certainly the case with Connect 4 Life's expansion into South Africa. And we're seeing early signs of that impact in our podcast. Launched last autumn, *Connect 4 Life: The Podcast*, has developed a solid listenership in many countries around the world, particularly in Japan and South Africa. And to reflect our growth into South Africa, we recently launched the podcast's newest series, "Dispatches from Johannesburg".

The first installment in "Dispatches from Johannesburg" was published March 4, and has so far touched a social media nerve. Listeners are responding warmly and enthusiastically, and they're commenting on everything from Facebook and Instagram to Bluesky and traditional email. The first installment, "Embracing Change and Discovering a Purpose", features the unedited audio of a keynote speech by Connect 4 Life's Founder, Melanie Taddeo, to the members of the Johannesburg New Dawn Rotary Club (a speech which was originally delivered February 26). That episode has a running time of roughly 15 minutes, but what an inspiring 15 minutes they are.

We'll let you decide. Check out our newest series, "Dispatches from Johannesburg" on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music and wherever you listen to your favourite podcasts.

Queen's Park Update: Looking Out for You

The Ontario election on February 27 returned the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Doug Ford to Queen's Park. We congratulate the re-elected government caucus, as well as all candidates chosen by the voters to serve on their behalf.

The Legislative Assembly is scheduled to resume April 14, with the Speech from the Throne due to be delivered the next day, on Tuesday the 15th.

Key to our concerns are matters related to the provincial budget as regards Ontarians with disabilities.

Connect 4 Life delivered recommendations to the Ministry of Finance consultations on December 17 of last year, as well as through our written Submission to the Ministry. Our next task is to present to the Standing Committee on Finance (once the committee process resumes).

We face unprecedented challenges, and our immediate goal in advocacy is to ensure that every Member of the Legislature fully appreciates that the impacts of today's challenges will potentially affect Ontarians with disabilities more profoundly (and likely more negatively).

This is no quick or simple solution to the rapidly escalating costs of living; and this is precisely why we are urging Members to create an all-Party, time-sensitive task force to devise do-able, practical and immediate measures that recognize the escalating costs of living for Ontarians with disabilities. Such measures must consider the spectrum – everything from transportation and housing to food, prescription drugs and attendant care.

In the interim, we will begin our own consultations and outreach on these matters, in part through our podcast, as well as through other means (to be announced). Stay tuned.



18th Session of the Conference Of States Parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A First for Connect 4 Life

We are honoured to share the news that Connect 4 Life will be participating in the largest gathering of disability, NGO and government representatives at United Nations headquarters this June. We are one of a very small group of Canadian disability organizations to receive this opportunity.

Now in its 18th year, the Conference of States Parties brings together more than 1,000 representatives to discuss and highlight the concerns around our global population of people with disabilities. These gatherings were originally designed to annually monitor and advance the discussion around the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which was the very first UN treaty of this century).


This year's theme centres on enhancing public awareness of the rights and contributions of persons with disabilities for social development leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development. Sub-themes include:

- empowering persons with disabilities and enhancing social development policies through innovative financing;
- leaving no one behind: using AI as a tool for supporting inclusivity to strengthen the participation of persons with disabilities;
- and recognizing and addressing the rights of Indigenous persons with disabilities and their role in advancing disability inclusion.

We'll be sharing documents and key points of discussion in the Advocacy section of our website, as well as providing updates in future issues of Advocacy4Life



United Nations



This newsletter is available as a Word document and PDF on our website, as well as an audio version which is produced for our podcast.

Let us know if we can enhance our accessibility options even more.



Mission and Vision

Mission

To enhance the potential of individuals with disabilities by strengthening their independence and contributions to society; and to promote positive social change by transforming public perception.

Vision

Eliminating barriers for people with disabilities in our community.

Thank you for reading!

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