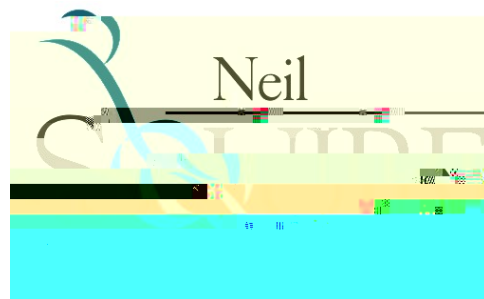# Annual Report 2008-2009

Neil

25th Anniversary Announcement

In 1981, Neil Squire, a 24 year old pre-med student and basketball star, was involved in a car accident that left him paralyzed from the neck down and unable to speak. A relative of Neil's named Bill Cameron, who was an inventor and research engineer, designed a machine to register a person's *sips* and *puffs* through a straw. The machine translated these sips and puffs to Morse Code, which appeared as letters on a computer screen, giving Neil a new voice.

This would prove to be our first step in linking technology and people with disabilities. When Neil died in 1984, the Neil Squire Society was started with a mere $2,000, which had been contributed in lieu of flowers at Neil's funeral.

In 1984, Society founder Bill Cameron envisioned a future in which technology would

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Message from the Chair and Executive Director

It was another busy and exciting year at the Neil Squire Society. A couple of highlights include the great success we have had in expanding our high-quality distance-learning experience for participants in our Employ-Ability Program. In addition, with our new emphasis on finding new mechanisms to enhance the accessibility of emerging technologies we are optimistic that the considerable energy we put into the CRTC hearings on accessible telecommunication and broadcast technologies will lead to some ground-breaking outcomes in this area.

As we look forward to next year we will be renewing the Society's strategic plan, placing even more resources into expanding the national reach of our distance-learning capabilities by migrating to a new delivery platform and continuing to build on our relationship with the CRTC to help ensure Canadians with disabilities have equal access to mainstream communication and broadcast technologies.

Gary Birch Receives Canada's Highest Civilian Honour

On December 30, 2008, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, announced the latest appointments to

Employ-Ability

Employ-Ability is a unique opportunity for employment skills enhancement for persons with physical disabilities who have never been employed or have been away from the job market typically for more than three years.

Providing a flexible and supportive environment, Employ-Ability takes a holistic approach to employment issues and considers the client's needs and abilities. It's based on three core modules: Career Development, Wellness for Work, and Employment Liaison & Work Experience.

Offered free-of-charge to qualifying clients, this program is primarily funded by the Government of Canada HRSDC under the Opportunities Fund for People with Disabilities.

Job Focus

Job Focus clients work one-on-one with our consultants to develop a vocational plan, which is tailored to meet their employment needs. This may include referrals to formal assessments which as vocational or ergonomics, training, referral to self-employment services or access to assistive technology and disability supports during training and employment.

Clients then work with our employment specialists to enhance their job search in order to obtain full-time or part-time employment or volunteer positions.

Offered free-of-charge, this program is funded by the Government of British Columbia Ministry of Housing and Social Development under the Employment Program for People with Disabilities (EPPD).

Computer Comfort

Computer Comfort is the perfect starting point for persons with physical disabilities who want to gain basic computer skills, increase their independence, and reach their personal goals. The program provides one-on-one tutoring in skills such as word processing, email or the internet; access to the most advanced assistive devices and software; provision or refurbished used computers if required, and on-going maintenance support. Participants work with volunteer tutors once-a-week to gain basic computer skills in a flexible, client-centered environment.

Offered free-of-charge, this program is primarily funded by the Province of British Columbia through a Direct Access Program Grant.

The Neil Squire Society creates opportunities for independence for individuals who have physical disabilities. One of our strategies is job development, and an important tool in that process is the National Occupation Classification (NOC) by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

The NOC lets clients and job developers learn the national code that a career falls under and that code is powerful in using other government and private employment resources to assist in finding workplace information, training, and job postings.

Until recently, the HRSDC NOC site, while adhering to internationally established W3C web accessibility standards, was not providing a service that was actually useable to persons with screen readers. Visual impaired users were unable to scan NOC web pages. They had to listen to every page in its entirety and try to remember where things were on a site with over 1000 sub-pages. While possible, this should not be realistically expected of anyone.

Neil Squire Society employee Ryan Thomas contacted the Products and Services Department of the HRSDC site, asking for the right to rebuild their site in a Neil Squire Society web space so that our visually impaired clients could make use of it. His intention was to build an accessibility bridge that exceeded basic W3C standards. What came of the process was something that no one expected.

Ryan began a dialogue with Amy Read, who at first was reluctant to allow the Neil Squire Society to reproduce the HRSDC content. Ryan explained how visually impaired persons experience their webpage and the internet as a whole. He then introduced the team at HRSDC to some tools that would let them simulate the experience. After that, the need was recognized but a solution was still withstanding.

Ryan went on to develop a proof of concept for what an accessible version of the HRSDC site would look like and shared the source code behind it. He spoke to Amy over the phone and explained what they would likely have to do to implement it on their side.

Part of the explanation was direction on what they would likely have to actually do, some script to accomplish it, and reassurances that it was probably an hour's work at most.

The changes were implemented over a period of several days, and the HRSDC and NOC web resources became useable. Ryan and the HRSDC team were proud of what they had accomplished in such a short period of time. Awareness of an issue was raised and quickly resolved through th Tcbeh16 Tc-t(nd v-1.1
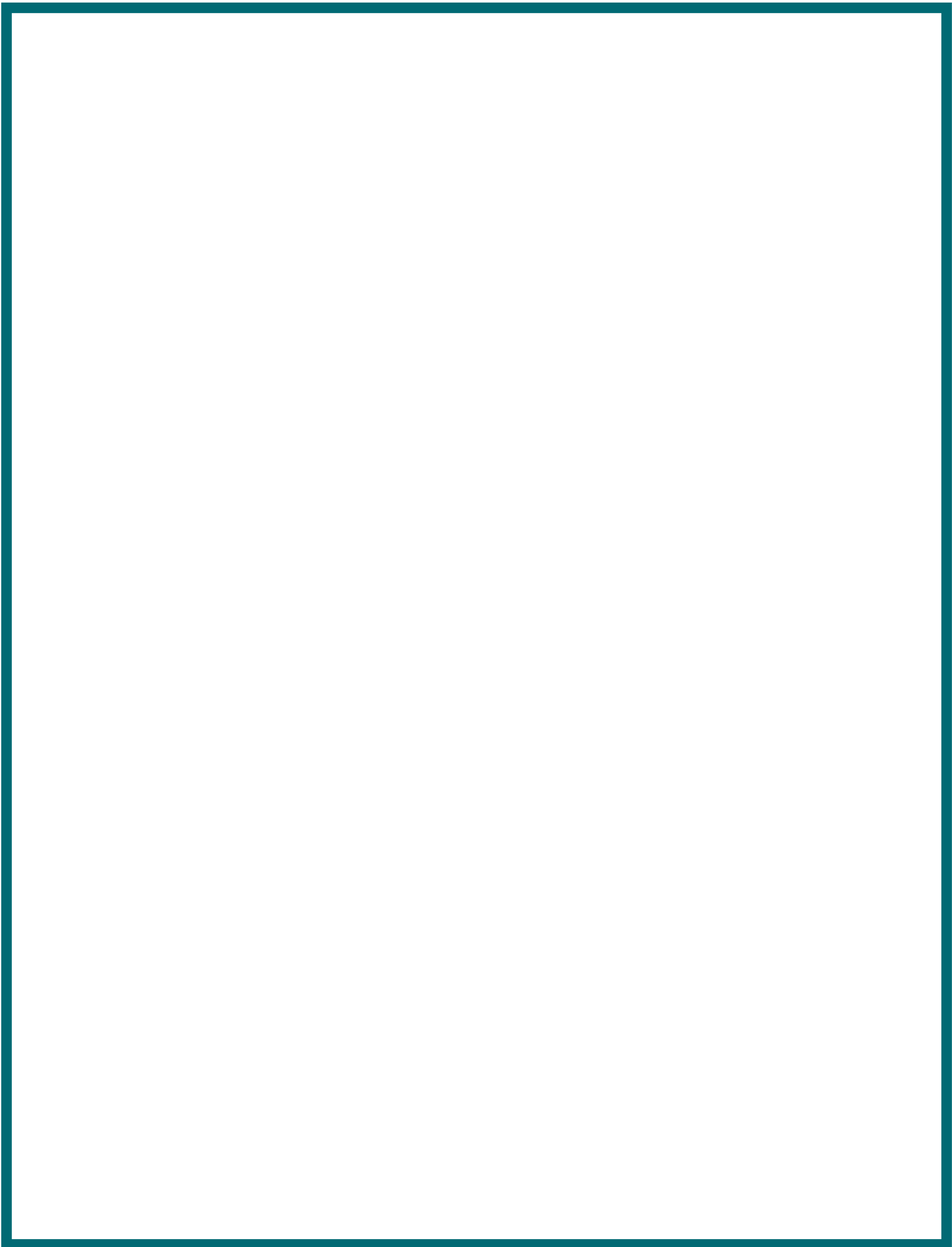
A Great Action Plan
For Employment Pays Off

For several years, 42 year-old Troy maintained all the equipment at a bustling lumber mill in New Brunswick.

During a busy day at work, Troy sustained a serious injury to his right leg and he could not return to his job. His employer was unable to accommodate him in any other position, so he was forced to leave the lumber industry.

Troy was unsure of what other occupations might interest him, so he joined the Neil Squire Society's 12 week Employ-Ability Program in Fredericton in October of 2006.

During his time in the program, Troy demonstrated an interest in working with computers and the Employ-Ability Program helped him explore different occupations in which he might use this new-found interest. He prepared an Employment Action Plan that guided him in identifying realistic action items that he could work on to accomplish his new employment goal of computer technician.

One of those action items was to acquire formal education and training. Upon completion of the Employ-Ability Program, Troy enrolled in the Information Systems Specialist Plus program at CompuCollege in Fredericton.

Troy graduated in May 2009 and returned to the Neil Squire Society for assistance as he began the job search phase of his Employment Action Plan. The staff was able to identify several employers in the Fredericton area who might be interested in Troy, and set up interviews for him. To prepare him, they reviewed and practiced the interviewing skills that Troy had learned two years earlier in the Employ-Ability program.

With the Neil Squire Society's assistance and the guidance of a solid Action Plan for Employment developed in the Employ-Ability Program, Troy successfully secured employment in August, 2009 with Sirius Solutions Inc.

Thank You to Our Donors 2008—2009

Major Donors

Vancouver Foundation

TD Bank Financial Group

REVENUE

	2009 $
Current	
Cash	62,126
Restricted cash	90,000
Accounts Receivable	564,340
Prepaid Expenses and other assets	22,064
	738,530
Capital Assets	65,882
	804,412

Liabilities

Current

Accounts Payable and accrued liabilities
Deferred revenue

Deferred contributions related to capital assets

Total Liabilities

Net Assets

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

REVENUE	2009 $	2008 $
Grants	2,575,773	2,632,657
Services	1,078,800	1,011,669
Training fees	165,437	170,224
Gaming	76,073	61,674
Donations	118,313	118,103
Interest and Other	7,976	17,800
	4,022,372	**4,012,127**

EXPENSES	2009 $	2008 $
Salaries and benefits	2,440,318	2,255,712
Consulting and contracts	531,060	513,052
Rent	368,970	363,908
Equipment lease and maintenance	150,017	151,904
Client Tuitions	104,911	174,870
Travel	104,896	154,812
Material and supplies	89,740	81,754
Telecommunications	71,344	84,314
Marketing and program development	32,375	48,062
Insurance	31,676	59,081
Other	22,189	22,254
Professional development	21,510	23,515
Postage and courier	15,659	16,304
Legal and audit	9,020	7,959
Honorariums	9,015	12,182
	2,990	1,680
	4,005,690	**3,971,363**

	2009 $	2008 $
Revenue over (under) expenses before other items	**16,682**	**40,764**

OTHER ITEMS	2009 $	2008 $
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	42,067	63,291
Amortization of capital assets	(58,517)	(65,464)
Revenue over (under) expenses for the year	**232**	**38,591**

Neil Squire Society

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