

**Andrew
Tutty**



Saturday, Dec. 3 is
International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

In March of 2007 Canada joined 82 signatories in signing The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, making history with the most number of signatories to any U.N. treaty on its first day. More importantly, it recognized these rights as being fundamental Human Rights.

The Convention is the first human rights treaty of the 21st century and adopts a broader definition of what constitutes a person with a disability. It recognizes that all persons have the right to participate fully in social, economic, cultural, and civil society, and to maintain personal freedoms. Its Optional Protocol is intended to be a method to allow individuals to communicate violations of The Convention to The U.N., facilitating subsequent investigation. According to the United Nations Enable website, Canada has not signed or ratified the Optional Protocol.

Since the end, in 1993, of the United Nations Decade of the Disabled, the U.N. has dedicated December 3 as The International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Its aim is to continually encourage governments and organizations worldwide to focus on issues related to persons with disabilities.

Through local events that celebrate and acknowledge the experience and capabilities of people with disabilities, we reaffirm the rights of persons with disabilities. We are all the beneficiaries of efforts to ensure full participation in society. Fully one quarter of the Earth's population is affected directly, being disabled, or as a caregiver or family member of a person with a disability.

The theme this year is "Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development". Events are being held in many countries worldwide. The Region of Peel has an event to provide business with tools and information to promote equal customer services for all. For information go to <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561#aroundtheworld> or call (905-791-7800); www.peelregion.ca; Bushra.Mukhtar@peelregion.ca.

Andrew Tutty is a member
of the Halton Hills Accessibility
Advisory Committee

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