

## Extreme Makeover ARBI Edition

ARBI is undergoing an extreme makeover of sorts. Our goal is to freshen up and modernize our facility!



In June, employees from the Bow Trail Branch of the Royal Bank helped prepare our memorial garden for planting by turning the sod and spreading mulch.

This fall, employees from Nova Chemicals painted our living room and helped dispose of unwanted items. A team from Imperial Oil painted the interior doors, built a new planter for our courtyard and cleaned up our horticultural area. Groups from RBC, ATCO Frontec and retired fire-fighters will also be pitching in with painting in the near future. We are grateful for their amazing support! The Calgary Home Builders Foundation will be completely renovating our kitchen to make it accessible for our clients. WOW!

**If you have a group willing to help,  
please contact Patti at 242-7116!**

## Volunteers' Voice – in their own words

“I go to ARBI for that inspiring feeling, knowing that anything is possible.”

**Kayla Friesen – ARBI Volunteer,  
Kinesiology Graduate U of C**

“My experience has been excellent and is now a part of my life.”

**Andrea Henry – ARBI Volunteer,  
Senior Geologist**

“My time at ARBI stands out as the most formative and rewarding experience I've ever had as a volunteer.”

**Neasa Coll – ARBI Volunteer,  
Medical Student 2009**

### Volunteers Needed!

To be part of this amazing experience,  
please contact: Wendy Daitch,  
Volunteer Program Leader  
217-4591 / [wendy@arbi.ca](mailto:wendy@arbi.ca)

**Please join us for our Christmas Open  
House, December 12 from 9-11:30 a.m.**

## E.D.'s Corner A note from the Executive Director



Over 200 people celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at our 2008 Stampede Breakfast. We were honoured to host Minister Mary Anne Jablonski and Alderman Joe Connelly as special guests.

ARBI is developing a strategic business plan that will guide us over the next three years. We will seek input from stakeholders to develop ARBI's strategic goals in the context of community needs. The next step will be to develop an action plan for delivering expanded services and achieving sustainability.

The United Way of Calgary and Alberta Seniors and Community Supports remain ARBI's two major core funders. We are grateful for their ongoing support!

ARBI recently hosted several *empathy* tours for corporations, volunteers and individual donors.

**Continued on page 2**

**Continued from page 1**

Our goal is to increase awareness of brain injuries and the impact it has on the survivor and their family. These tours have been very well received and everyone leaves with a new outlook on life. As we approach the holiday season, we reflect upon how our clients teach us to appreciate the little things in life. The story *The Tale of a Pudding* underscores this sentiment.

## The Tale of a Pudding

As we approach the Christmas season or some might say the season of excess, we wish to share a special client moment with you.

**“Food never tasted so good!” “Absolutely awesome!” “It was wonderful!”** Words from a man who just had his first taste of food after almost three years of not eating.

Alan suffered a stroke in 2005 and was unable to eat since complications in 2006. Before his injury, he had competed in the Ironman Triathlon six times!

Training for an Ironman is a tremendous challenge; one has to eat close to 5000 calories daily to keep up with the volume of exercise. Alan had it down to a science, including the number of jelly beans he needed to eat per hour while on his 100 km plus bike rides.

When Alan suffered a stroke, his life changed – from 5000 calories a day to tube feeding.

Alan received his food and drink through a tube until it was safe for him to eat puréed foods and take small sips of liquids. Finally, after three years the day came when he was able to taste *real* food.

Words cannot adequately paint the picture, but the look of happiness and satisfaction on his face

was enough to bring tears to our eyes. Those of us who witnessed this event consider ourselves privileged. For his first meal, Alan chose a butterscotch pudding – the kind that comes in a small plastic container for about \$1.65. Alan enjoyed the pudding, greatly savouring every spoonful! He has since tried chocolate, which he liked even more.

While Alan still has to follow strategies when eating and drinking, it is a small price to pay to be able to eat at last. He still receives most of his nutrition through a tube but can eat foods like puddings, applesauce and ice cream for enjoyment. Alan looks forward to the day when his food choices can increase, but he is patient and is enjoying what he can do now!

So, ponder a moment as you sit down to your Christmas feast. Pause as you take your second helping of mashed potatoes and gravy, or dab some plum sauce on your Christmas cake ... savour each bite and think about the lessons from *The Tale of a Pudding*.



## Volunteers in Profile – A Family Affair

I was asked to write a profile of a family coping with the long-term effects that a stroke had on their loved one. I learned that Judy had been steadfast in her support of her husband Pat. Judy’s dedication is inspiring; she has helped Pat with his rehab since Fall 2004. What makes this story even more remarkable is that the family bond extends even further ...

Maureen could be setting the table for dinner, or making a pot of tea. There’s that comfortable familiarity of going about daily routine.

What Maureen is actually doing is securing her

brother to a tilt table as part of his ongoing rehabilitation therapy.

Pat’s stroke changed not only his life, but the lives of everyone around him. Maureen says it could have been worse; **they still have Pat**. In addition, thanks to Pat’s daily rehab at ARBI, they can still chat with him. They still get to enjoy Pat’s humour – even when you don’t want the humour, his sister would add.

In the past, Pat always focused on doing things for others. Now Maureen is happy to give back to her beloved brother. Pat needs assistance with his daily rehab and his family has rallied together to do just that!

Even Maureen’s husband Tom is part of the action, helping with Pat’s program as required. Tom is the *handy guy*; custom building occupational therapy tools, cutting out wood for projects in the wood shop, and anything else Pat can think to “volunteer” him for.

This family’s life has some challenges. What Judy, Maureen and Tom do is extraordinary but in their words, it is what a family does for each other. What this family does has brought them closer together. **By Valerie Roney**

