

# Parents as Partners Conference

Workshop Session: A16

Room: 205C

## Tools for Disability Awareness, Accessibility and Inclusion

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Want to help build a school culture of students who understand the importance of an accessible and inclusive learning environment? Curious about building accessible playgrounds? Join this interactive workshop led by parent, educator and Rick Hansen Foundation School Program Champion. Walk away with free resources that teach about accessibility, inclusion and every student's ability to make a difference.

[www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/School-Program](http://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/School-Program), [www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Ambassador-Program](http://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Ambassador-Program)

### **Diane Talbot-Schoenhoff**

Parent, Educator, Journalist, Rick Hansen Foundation School Program Champion

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Diane Talbot-Schoenhoff is a coordinator with the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program in Ontario. She has a longstanding relationship with the Rick Hansen Foundation, which began over 12 years ago.

In February 2005, Diane's son sustained an incomplete spinal cord injury (SCI) in a tragic snowboarding accident. It was in May of that same year, when she was first introduced to Rick Hansen at a Wheels in Motion press conference at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. It was people like Rick who encouraged Diane to become an advocate and champion for the cause of SCI.

In the spring of 2009, while a member of the "Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion" Toronto Solutions Committee, Diane proposed a solution of her own to fund youth transitioning from paediatric to adult outpatient services in Ontario. With unanimous approval from the Committee and thanks to seed funding from the Foundation, she formed her charity, Support in Motion (SIM). Determined to see children with spinal cord injuries have the best chance at recovery, she began raising awareness for the cause and funds for more services. Through SIM, Diane successfully advocated to the Ministry of Health to create a new spinal cord injury rehab program for children and youth.

Now that the gap has been filled and the charity has dissolved, Diane is thrilled to be joining the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program. She hopes to bring her son's experience with disability and her personal passion for accessibility to each and every school across the province, including French schools.

Diane holds a Masters in Linguistics & Translation from the University of Montreal, a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Journalism from Ryerson University and a Bachelor of Arts from Queen's University. She was a proud medal bearer for the 25th Anniversary of the Rick Hansen Man in Motion World Tour, along with her son Nick. Her work in government advocacy earned her the Barbara Turnbull Person of the Year Award in 2013.