

Torchbearer Profiles: Vancouver 24 HR Relay – Thursday March 11 – Friday March 12

Sam Sullivan

Sam Sullivan, of Vancouver, is one of Vancouver's most high profile persons with a disability. As former mayor of Vancouver, Sullivan accepted the Olympic flag for Vancouver at the 2006 Torino Winter Games. Sullivan is also a tireless advocate for accessibility, having worked to ensure that Vancouver is one of the most accessible cities in the world.

Mark and David Antoniuk

The Antoniuk brothers entered the contest in hopes that they could run in honour of their brother Ben, aged 9, who was born with spina bifida and requires a wheelchair for transportation. In their contest applications, the Antoniuk brothers refer to Ben's positive attitude and ability to bring joy to others in life. On March 11, Mark and David will surely keep Ben smiling, as both carry the Paralympic Flame during the inspirational 24-hour relay.

Carly Grigg

Carly Grigg of Victoria is a Registered Massage Therapist and former member of the Canadian Para Alpine ski team. She is legally blind due to optic nerve atrophy, which now affects nerves in the rest of her body. Although she is no longer able to be a competitive alpine ski racer, Carly's determination to be involved in sport has led her to switch sports and train hard in hopes of making the Canadian Para Cycling Team. Carly is also an ActNow BC athlete ambassador. She says carrying the Paralympic Flame will be a dream come true.

Brenda and Michael Windsor

Mother and son Brenda and Michael Windsor of Sarnia, Ontario are very excited and proud to be torchbearers in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. Michael developed his love of hockey at a very young age and has been playing for the Sarnia Ice Hawks sledge hockey team since age 8. He was thrilled when he met national sledge hockey team members Paul Rosen and Brad Bowden, who inspired Michael to train hard in hopes of one day making the national team himself. Michael believes his opportunity to be a torchbearer is symbolic of his journey to someday being an athlete representing Canada at the Paralympic Games. With dreams of being the mother of a future Paralympian, Brenda believes that having a disabled child opens your eyes to the world and you learn many lessons that otherwise would pass you by.

Laurel Crosby

Laurel Crosby has an extensive history of supporting the Paralympic Movement and athletes with disabilities. She has twice had the indescribable experience of leading Canada's team into an Opening Ceremonies; the first in Seoul, Korea (1988) when she was the Wheelchair Team Manager and in Barcelona, Spain (1992) where she was the Chef de Mission. In March 2009, Crosby was recognized with the Daryl Thompson Award, presented to individuals who make a significant contribution to sport over a long period of time. She is the past President of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association and, for the past 30 years, has been a member of the B.C. Wheelchair Sports Board of Directors. She acknowledges the tenacity of the athletes and the commitment of volunteers as motivating factors for her continued support for athletes with disabilities. In addition to her role in Seoul (1988) and Barcelona (1992), Crosby has also attended the Paralympic Games in Atlanta (1996) and Nagano (1998). She has also been President of the Canadian Paralympic Committee. Crosby will be a torchbearer during the inspiration 24-hour portion of the relay, taking place in from March 11-12.

Jennifer Erlendson

Jennifer Erlendson is a public servant that has been training with a fellow athlete in hopes of one day competing for Canada in Para-Cycling. Her athletic partner and colleague Carly is visually impaired and has a background in Para-Alpine Skiing. Jennifer believes that the values of the Public Service are evident in the spirit of Paralympics, as athletes embrace their belief to overcome a physical disability. They exemplify courage, teamwork, service, passion, accountability and so much more. Jennifer believes carrying the Paralympic Flame is a unique and special opportunity, and she hopes that she and Carly can carry the Paralympic Flame together, on a tandem bicycle!

Kevin Wilson

Kevin Wilson recalls his first friend at Capilano College – an individual requiring a wheelchair after a cliff diving accident – as his inspiration. Despite the injury, Wilson's friend had a lust to learn and enjoy life. Wilson says Terry Fox and Rick Hansen are other individuals who exemplify the same courage. Wilson will carry the Paralympic Flame as a representative of the spirit of overcoming great challenges.

Marco Niccoli

Marco Niccoli has used a wheelchair since birth. The Paralympic Games are an inspiration and encouraged Niccoli to apply for a torchbearer position. He calls it a time to feel the spirit and confidence of the Games.

Carrie Belyea

Carrie Belyea dislocated her knee in 2003 while she refereed a basketball tournament. With a torn ACL and MCL, Belyea was told she never be able to referee at a high level again. Today, she has a national referee badge and a spot in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Jim Storie

Jim Storie was born and raised in Vancouver. The Winter Games in Vancouver are a dream come true for Storie. He has been actively involved in the tourism industry, ensuring Vancouver is the most accessible city to ever host the Games.

Samanta Ellis

Samanta Ellis is eager to be a torchbearer, citing winter sports, equality, courage and determination as inspiring reasons to be involved in the Paralympic Torch Relay. She wants to set an example for the world when carrying the flame, believing people should strive for positive change when they have a chance because another opportunity might never come along.

Carli Rose

Carli Rose plays hockey and coaches. She loves all sports and recently won an award for top female athlete at her school. Rose was chosen to participate in Encounters with Canada and was very proud to represent her school and community in Ottawa where she met other students from across Canada. While in Ottawa, she met a member of the ice sledge hockey team who gave an inspiring speech. Rose says athletes in the Paralympic Winter Games show great courage and determination; inspiring qualities that help us reach our goals.

Krista Tulloch

Krista Tulloch is a special education teacher for the last 15 years, supporting all learners in achieving their best. She describes the torchbearer role as a way to show respect for individuals who have persevered to accomplish their goals. It is also an opportunity to support the people behind the journey. Tulloch hopes her time as a torchbearer will encourage her students to consider ways to develop and achieve their own goals.

Christine Briggs

Christine Briggs wanted to be a torchbearer so she could inspire her three children, and her students, to be physically active and live a healthy lifestyle. Briggs has always adored the Winter Games and what they stand for, striving to be the best athlete possible herself. She describes her time to carry the Paralympic Flame as a fantastic opportunity to be a small part of the Games.

Ian Boers

Ian Boers recognizes the commitment required by all Paralympic athletes to excel in the Paralympic Winter Games. Boers ran his first marathon at the age of 52. He calls his run a small commitment in comparison to the dedication required by each athlete competing in the Games. Boers will carry the flame on behalf of the dedication and commitment demonstrated by all athletes.

Jamille Austrial

Jamille Austrial, of Pitt Meadows, is a nursing student and a practical nurse who has witnessed people defeat the odds against illness and injury. Austrial is proud to carry the flame as a symbol of the courage shown by current and future athletes, calling them an inspiration for the nation.

Lee Turner

Lee Turner has shown incredible courage over the past 15 years, dealing with major health problems which required him to give up on the love of his life – running. Turner was determined to find an alternative activity and soon discovered the joy of power-walking. When the next health challenge surfaced, Turner became a fan of deep water running. He currently wears a knee brace, allowing him to continue his power-walking exercises. He calls himself fortunate, stating he has never been the victim of discrimination or inequality. He calls the dedication, perseverance and hard work of Paralympic athletes a true inspiration for others. Turner's positive attitude will surely be on full display during the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Caitlin Creamer

Caitlin Creamer of Coquitlam will fulfill her dream of becoming a torchbearer, just like the athletes who have made their dreams of going to the Games come true.

Patricia Mounsey

Patricia Mounsey is an elementary school teacher and a sincere believer in equality for all. Mounsey explains her school is often sought out by parents because of its inclusive nature and small community spirit. She says her own class shows amazing empathy towards others and is very accepting. Mounsey indicates her class has students of various ages, so they are all there to learn from each other.

Amanda Naso

Amanda Naso was hit by a car in 2009 and required immediate surgery on her left leg. Since that time, she has been working on rebuilding her leg muscles and is now able to jump and play volleyball twice a week. She never fell behind on her studies at UBC and wrote a novel during her recovery. Naso admits the pain is frustrating at times, but she now has a special admiration for all Paralympic athletes.

Heather Walkus

Heather Walkus has dealt with the struggles of going blind and now volunteers to help people with disabilities, assisting them with the technology they use.

Erin Maxymchuk

Erin Maxymchuk is a registered massage therapist and has traveled with three different Paralympic teams over the last three years. Maxymchuk encourages athletes with their sports and was a member of the core medical team in Beijing, and the upcoming Paralympic Winter Games. She is very excited about her opportunity to carry the flame in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Jaclyn MacRae

Jaclyn MacRae has, from a very young age, had the distinct privilege of working with children who have special needs - from learning disabilities, Spina bifida and deafness to Schizencephaly/Cerebral Palsy. MacRae believes we can all learn something profound and meaningful from each and every child, we only need to take the time to do so. In her torchbearer application, MacRae says she will carry the flame for Alexandra, Jason, Christina, John, Sarah-Anne and the many other people who have touched her life over the years. These are the people who have taught her not to worry about the small things and live life to the fullest. MacRae will be their voice during her the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Janet Khoo

Janet Khoo of Burnaby is a nurse who has always provided first-aid, helping at the Bonsor Recreation Centre when during the Paralympic Summer Games. Paralympic athletes have impressed Khoo with their enthusiasm and determination. Khoo is a very proud Canadian who shortened her visit to Singapore so she could be in Vancouver for the Games.

Calvin Lee

Calvin Lee of Coquitlam calls the opportunity to be involved in the Paralympic Torch Relay a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a historical moment in his life he will always remember.

John Nelson

John Nelson's son, Benji, deals with knee problems after playing sports, severing both of his anterior cruciate ligaments (ACL) while snow skiing. Now Nelson's son is unable to ski without wearing braces, and can't run because of the damage to the cartilage in both knees. Nelson, who rowed for the Canadian National Team in the 1970's, will participate in the Paralympic Torch Relay for his son.

Di Wu

Di Wu, of Vancouver, had a dream about participating in the Games and will now have the experience of a lifetime as a torchbearer in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Hayley Huculak

Hayley Huculak's passion for sports and desire to promote the Paralympic movement are evident in her application. She will have the opportunity to share her enthusiasm during her time in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Matt Ficocelli

Matt Ficocelli, of Kelowna, calls the Paralympic Torch Relay an inspirational journey and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. He is grateful to have the chance to carry the Paralympic flame.

Jaimie Borisoff

Jaimie Borisoff is a four-time Paralympic athlete who is excited about the exposure the Paralympic Winter Games are receiving during Vancouver 2010. As Borisoff states, this is the first time many Canadian's will have the opportunity to see great athletes on the world stage. Speaking as a torchbearer, he is thrilled to be a small part of the event.

Zitian Chen

Zitian Chen is very interested in sports and participates in a variety of runs around the city, despite having a disability. Zitian has run in the Vancouver Sun Run from 2007 to 2009, the Pacific Spirit Run, Terry Fox Run, Run for Canada and plans to join the Vancouver International Marathon soon. Zitian dreams of qualifying to become an athlete in Canada for the BC Special Olympics Team. Carrying the Paralympic Flame would symbolize lighting the hope for Zitian's dreams and for the spirit of the Paralympic Games.

Michelle Onyango

Michelle Onyango strives every day to provide the best environment for her children, friends and community members regardless of what I may be facing. She volunteers by coaching youth sports team, and she sees the obstacles these children face – emotionally, physically or monetarily. Michelle recognizes that the Paralympic athletes face challenges that most of us never encounter, and appreciates their efforts, courage and determination. Michelle hopes to emulate some of those same characteristics when she deals with her comparatively smaller challenges. Carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay would help Michelle set a great example for her teams and family and would be an excellent teaching tool. She considers this a chance to fulfill a lifelong dream in celebration and preparation of the fulfillment of so many others' dreams at the Paralympic Winter Games.

Paul Taylor

Paul Taylor was the manager of volunteers for the Calgary Games in 1988. He has also been involved in the Special Olympics as a volunteer. Paul says those two activities were part of the long road that has been travelled to make our society more inclusive for the disabled community. He views the Vancouver Paralympic Winter Games as an opportunity to celebrate the progress that has been made and to challenge our society to continue to do better. He says participating as a runner carrying the Paralympic Flame in the Paralympic Torch Relay would be a unique experience and celebration.

Christopher Hancock

Christopher Hancock from North Vancouver is honoured to be a torchbearer in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay and proud to share the experience with his son watching. In his torchbearer application, Christopher says the Paralympic Games represent the spirit of what sport is all about and Paralympic athletes serve as role models for today's youth and inspire people around the world.

Lena Ling

Lena Ling from Vancouver is an educator who inspires her students to persevere no matter the hurdles. As a torchbearer, she wants to demonstrate to her students the importance of physical activity and that setting goals and being persistent will allow them to accomplish things in life.

Rose Hare

Rose Hare from Burnaby is an active participant in many sports and wants to show her support for individuals who are doing their best in sport in their daily lives. In her application, Rose says she has always marvelled at the courage and skill of Paralympic athletes. She is proud and honoured to be selected as a torchbearer in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Jenny Dix-Cooper

Jenny Dix-Cooper, of Vancouver is no stranger to running in 24 hour relays. For the past four years Dix-Cooper has been the captain of her team for the Easter Seals 24 Hour Relay, helping to send children with disabilities to summer camp. Dix-Cooper will run with the Paralympic Flame during the 24 hour relay portion of the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Kimberly Cioban

Kimberly Cioban, of Vancouver is an elementary school teacher who believes that running with the Paralympic Flame will demonstrate the importance of equal opportunities for all athletes.

Rita Blosmanis

Rita Blosmanis, of Richmond, feels that despite the challenges we all face in life, it is personal conviction and determination that keeps us going.

Chris Hope

Chris Hope, of Vancouver, hopes that by being a Paralympic Torchbearer he can express his appreciation and support for all the athletes who have worked tirelessly to represent us to the world.

Meaghan Benmore

Meaghan Benmore, of Vancouver, has in recent years overcome a serious illness that left her without the ability to walk for long periods. With training she has regained her strength and is excited to participate in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Douglas Rogers

Douglas Rogers, of Whistler, won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Erin Lewyk

Erin Lewyk, of Vancouver, won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Wendy Clarke

Wendy Clarke, of Canmore, A.B., is running with the Paralympic Flame to represent those in her community who face mental and physical challenges.

Geoffrey Baker

Geoffrey Baker, of Vancouver, will be a proud Paralympic Torchbearer, and father, alongside his 8 year old son who suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

Christian Williamson

Christian Williamson, of Oshawa, O.N., believes in the Paralympic movement and the hope it brings to those with challenges. Williamson is a volunteer coach working to bring sit/stand volleyball to the Paralympic Games.

Murray Siple

Murray Siple, of North Vancouver, is a documentary film maker who believes the Paralympic Torch Relay is an excellent opportunity to represent disabilities of all shapes and sizes.

Valerie Kim

Valerie Kim, of Vancouver, is honoured to run with the Paralympic Flame and to represent those whose stories of disability highlight a common thread of perseverance and dedication.

Connor Svensrud

Connor Svensrud, of North Vancouver, believes running with the Paralympic Flame is a great honour and looks forward to showing his Paralympic spirit.

Katherine Bland

Katherine Bland, of Abbotsford, has volunteered with Paralympic competitions in her community and has been inspired by many of the athletes. Bland feels it would be a great honour to run with the Paralympic Flame.

Calvin Hong

Calvin Hong, of Vancouver, believes the Paralympic movement represents the old adage that if there is a will, there is a way. Hong has volunteered to help the less fortunate in third world countries and is proud to have made a difference in the lives of children living in poverty.

Garth McFadden

Garth McFadden, of Richmond, has kept strong over the years despite the sudden loss of family members and an accident that left his young son an amputee. McFadden is running with the Paralympic Flame to represent his son, to represent healing and to represent Canada.

Alexander Dove

Alexander Dove, of North Vancouver, is ecstatic to be a Paralympic Torchbearer and hopes to one day tell children and grandchildren about the experience.

Elizabeth Gass

Elizabeth Gass, of Vancouver, has played a meaningful role in the lives of those with disabilities. Gass worked as a HandyDART driver for 7 years and learned about hope, courage and self respect from the brave people she drove around town.

Michelle Petherbridge

Michelle Petherbridge, of Edmonton, A.B., suffers from Muscular Dystrophy. Each day provides new challenges for Petherbridge, but no matter how she feels she gives 110%. By running with the Paralympic Flame, Petherbridge hopes to inspire others to never give up.

Darcy Good

Darcy Good, of Nanaimo, is proud to represent the First Nations community as a Paralympic Torchbearer. Good believes it is truly inspirational to see how much the men and women have overcome to compete in the Paralympic Winter Games.

Darcy Grant

Darcy Grant, of Fort Langley, lives with a damaged spinal cord. Despite limitations, Grant finds joy in time spent with family and satisfaction at work. Grant holds tremendous respect for Paralympic athletes and understands what it takes to get past your limitations and achieve your best.

Kathleen Avery-Wilson

Kathleen Avery-Wilson, of Coquitlam, worked tirelessly as a 2010 Olympic Winter Games volunteer and is planning to carry on the trend for the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. For Avery-Wilson, running with the Paralympic Flame would be a special honour.

Harry Stefanakis

Harry Stefanakis, of Vancouver, is a Greek-Canadian who holds a great deal of respect for the courage, determination and resiliency of Paralympic athletes. As a person of Greek ancestry, Stefanakis appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Paralympic Torch Relay as it relates to his Greek cultural background while showcasing athletes who represent the resiliency of the human spirit.

Jennifer King

Jennifer King, of Surrey, works in a spinal cord unit at Vancouver General Hospital and would be proud as a Paralympic Torchbearer to represent all the brave patients she sees every day.

James Bachop

James Bachop, of Vancouver, believes that all people should be able to participate in sports equally and that our Paralympic athletes set a good example for the rest of us to follow.

Melissa Kwantes

Melissa Kwantes, of Delta, has a severe learning disability. Despite her struggles, she is a competitive athlete and represents the Paralympic spirit of overcoming your challenges.

Audrey Martyn

Audrey Martyn, of North Vancouver, is inspired to run with the Paralympic Flame by the determination she sees in the performances of world class Paralympic athletes. Her heart swells with pride when she witnesses the accomplishments of those who face challenges.

Bryнна Corcoran

Bryнна Corcoran, of Maple Ridge, was born with spina bifida, yet remains active by sit-skiing. Corcoran is proud to be a Canadian and to live in a country that promotes equality and showcases the Paralympic Winter Games as no other country has ever before.

Kiana Quinn-Charron

Kiana Quinn-Charron, of Surrey, has struggled with ADHD and learning disabilities. As a young skater, Quinn-Charron has used sport to face her challenges head on.

Bet Tuason

Bet Tuason, of Vancouver, is a person with a disability and passionately shares personal experiences, circumstances and ideas with others who face the same struggles. Tuason is an active member in a number of societies for those with disabilities, including the Paralympic School Day Program and the Brain Injury Foundation of BC

Bill Kastelen

Bill Kastelen, of Coldstream, is a senior who supports his wife with Parkinson's disease. Kastelen is proud to be a Paralympic Torchbearer to represent his wife and his community.

Maria Couzens

Maria Couzens, of Burnaby, is a survivor of Stevens-Johnson Syndrome. Because of the personal growth and hard lessons learned through her struggles with this condition, Couzens now functions better than ever before.

Michael Fox

Michael Fox of Port Coquitlam is an advocate for people with special abilities, including working with special needs children through the Lions Society. In his torchbearer application, he mentions his strong belief in the power of sport and the Paralympic movement for these amazing athletes.

Linda Wong

Linda Wong from Richmond is honoured to be a torchbearer in the Paralympic Torch Relay. She is inspired and motivated by her 15 month old daughter who has Down syndrome.

Lelainia Lloyd

Lelainia Lloyd of Coquitlam is an artist, wife and mother who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis two years ago. She has undergone treatment and has a positive attitude to keep moving forward.

Christina Gilbert

Christina Gilbert from Vancouver is proud to represent her community by carrying the flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Michael Hutchinson

Michael Hutchinson of North Vancouver says that carrying the Paralympic Flame is a chance in a lifetime to represent his community and country.

Zachary Barrett

Zachary Barrett from Coquitlam was diagnosed with autism at age 12 and believes everyone should be treated equally whatever their challenges are. He practices karate, plays the piano, likes to volunteer and help others. He is very proud to be a torchbearer in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Jay Siddal

Jay Siddal from Coquitlam was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease about three years ago. He hopes his experience as a torchbearer will serve as an example for others who are also striving to overcome a life challenge.

Michel Guay

Michel Guay of North Vancouver was a volunteer at Cypress Mountain during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. He is looking forward to sharing his experience as a torchbearer with his family and friends.

Bridget Spain

Bridget Spain of Burnaby won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after she was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Nicholas Begg

Nicholas Begg of Vancouver has a hearing impairment and says he knows how difficult it can be to overcome adversity. In his application, Nicholas said he would like to honour the courageous athletes by carrying the flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. Originally from England, Nicholas also welcomes the opportunity to participate in such a unique event in the city and country he now calls home.

Kimberley Allan

Kimberley Allan of Whistler works with people from all over B.C. and around the world through the Whistler Adaptive Sports Program, which teaches people to ski and snowboard. She also volunteers at GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver to assist people who have been recently injured.

Ann Marie Rossi

Ann Marie Rossi of Vancouver is proud to carry the Paralympic Flame for a cousin with a disability whose hard work and determination has served as an inspiration for her own life.

Jack Christie

Jack Christie from Vancouver is honoured to be a torchbearer in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. He was inspired when he first attended the IPC World Cup Nordic races at Mount Washington two years ago. In his torchbearer application, he wrote that he believes the Olympics are where heroes are made while the Paralympics are where heroes come out to play.

Randy Grixti

Randy Grixti from Vancouver is a volunteer with both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In his torchbearer application, he said he is inspired in his daily life by the achievements of Paralympic athletes and wanted to carry the Paralympic Flame to support and thank the athletes. He believes through patience, understanding, compassion and determination we can overcome any of life's obstacles and help others overcome theirs.

Manpreet Sidhu

Manpreet Sidhu of Abbotsford has Spina Bifida but he has beaten the odds despite an early prognosis that he would never walk. He enjoyed being a torchbearer for the 2002 BC Disability Games and is looking forward to being a torchbearer in the Paralympic Torch Relay. Manpreet volunteers in his community and is attending university with a goal of earning a Masters in Speech Pathology.

Marie York-Condon

Marie York-Condon from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories is a civilian member of the RCMP who was involved with and inspired by the Olympic Torch Relay when it crossed the territory. She is also a committee member for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics NWT. She is proud to be a torchbearer for the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Corrie Carlile

Corrie Carlile of North Vancouver proudly represented Canada in the Special Olympics for 20 years. She competed in the 2003 World Special Olympic Summer Games in Ireland where she won two gold medals in swimming. She then trained very hard to earn a spot at the 2005 World Special Olympic Winter Games in Japan where she won two silver medals in snowshoe racing. Corrie wants to make the world a better place for people with disabilities, and strives to break down barriers and change attitudes.

Mary McCormack

Mary McCormack from North Vancouver was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1985 but her positive attitude and family support help her persevere every day. She is also proud of her two children Ciara and Conor. She will have a big smile as she carries the flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Brandon Southern

Brandon Southern from Langley is excited to be a torchbearer for the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. He wanted to carry the flame to demonstrate his pride for Canada and show the rest of the world that Canada is an amazing place.

Tommy Lam

Tommy Lam of Coquitlam won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

William de Groot

William de Groot of New Westminster won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Po Hon Tsui

Po Hon Tsui of Burnaby won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after being randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Jiao Zhixian

Jiao Zhixian of Port Moody won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after being randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Kuang-Hong Lo

Kuang-Hong Lo from Burnaby is very proud to represent Canada and help spread the spirit of the Paralympic Games by carrying the flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Ola Kobza

Ola Kobza of North Vancouver is excited by the lively and competitive spirit the 2010 Winter Games have brought to Vancouver. Ola is honoured to carry the Paralympic Flame.

Tina-Louise Harris

Tina-Louise Harris of Coquitlam is a proud Canadian competitive long distance runner and lives an active lifestyle. She is inspired by athletes with a disability and believes anything is possible with hard work, determination and the will to succeed at being the best one can be.

Suzanne Pearce

Suzanne Pearce from Delta is a recreational marathon and half-marathon runner who says she is always amazed by the abilities of all elite athletes. She is honoured to carry the flame in the Paralympic Torch Relay to recognize and celebrate the tremendous achievements and commitment of Paralympic athletes.

Denise Fergusson

Denise Fergusson of North Vancouver won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after she was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Jeanette Froese

Jeanette Froese from North Vancouver believes Paralympic athletes epitomize strength, courage and tenacity. She is honoured to be a torchbearer in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Amber Sessions

Amber Sessions of Vancouver says the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games is truly a great event that will set the standard for future Paralympic Games and accessible tourism. In her application, Amber says she is inspired by the athletic achievement of Paralympic athletes and wants show her support these athletes and people with a disability, by being a torchbearer in the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Tim McGonigle

Tim McGonigle from Lake Cowichan has been involved with coaching young men and women with mobility challenges for a number of years. As a coach for the Victoria Storm (an electric wheelchair hockey team) he was inspired by the joy and smiles on the faces of the athletes. Tim says those were the best years of his coaching experience and he is running with the Paralympic Flame for each and every one of those athletes.

Erin Bird

Erin Bird from North Vancouver is honoured to carry the Paralympic Flame. In her torchbearer application, she mentions it would be a privilege to represent the extraordinary and dedicated athletes of the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

Johanna Johnson

Johanna Johnson from Vancouver is a special education and classroom teacher with a long history of volunteer involvement with the disability community through the BC Paraplegic Association, TETRA Society, and a support group for women with disabilities. She was the recipient of the 2005 Courage to Come Back Award in the Physical Rehabilitation category and was inducted into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame in 2004. Johanna is also President of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities.

Steve Lewarne

Steve Lewarne of Vancouver is honoured to carry the Paralympic Flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. Steve's life has revolved around sport and he always aspired to be an elite athlete. He works in the Athletics department at Simon Fraser University and is surrounded by athletes, many of whom are present and future Olympians.

James Sanders

James Sanders of Vancouver has enjoyed a career in the arts and athletics, including playing wheelchair rugby at the national level for several seasons. James says through his work in the theatre, he wants to deepen the audience's understanding of the disability experience. As a torchbearer, James will honour both the athletes in their pursuit of excellence and all people with disabilities.

Kelly Smith

Kelly Smith from Langley was honoured to represent Canada at the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. He won a silver medal in the Marathon in Athens. He looks forward to celebrating all of the great achievements of Canada's athletes at the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

David Johnston

David Johnston from Delta is running in the 24-hour relay portion of the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games torch relay. He's carrying the flame to honour all of the amazing people involved in the Paralympic Winter Games.

Alex Cairns

Alex Cairns of Garibaldi Highlands was born with spina bifida, lives with lower leg paralysis, has had over 10 surgeries but has overcome all of those obstacles to be a downhill mountain biker in Squamish and Whistler, and has taken up sit skiing over the past three years. He has just recently been asked to start training with the B.C. Provincial disabled team. Alex loves sport and feels grateful that he lives in the Sea to Sky area where he can take part in outdoor sports. Alex has volunteered for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and considers it an honour to carry the Paralympic Flame on behalf of all athletes.

Denise Wong

Denise Wong of Richmond has been a volunteer in her community for five years and has had the opportunity to assist in the Richmond senior homes where residents often live with a disability. Denise believes that the Paralympic Winter Games are equally important as the Olympic Winter Games and that disabled or able-bodied, the main goal of both Games is for athletes to do their best and compete with each other. She feels that representing her community in the Paralympic Torch Relay will be an experience of a lifetime, and she is excited to show those around her that she supports the Paralympic Games and the athletes while she carries the flame.

Craig Langston

Craig Langston of Burnaby lives with cerebral palsy and uses a power wheelchair to get around day to day. He's a very active player in amateur disability sports in B.C. and is the Vice President on the Board of Directors for the Cerebral Palsy Sports Association of B.C. (also known as SportAbility). Craig is also a former athlete in the Wheelchair Boccia and is now the B.C. Assistant Provincial Coach in the same sport. Craig is honoured to be a torchbearer in the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games torch relay.

Pamela Hollington

Pamela Hollington from North Vancouver has overcome losses in her life with courage and determination, including the loss of her two-year-old nephew who never had the chance to participate fully in life and sports, and missed many opportunities. Her sister-in-law has lived with MS for many years and her best friend has just been diagnosed with MS as well. For all of these people, Pamela volunteers actively in her community helping with programs for sport and active living, providing inspiration to others through courage and good example. She has volunteered with PJs for Premies, craft events at Ronald McDonald House, MS Fundraising events and many more activities. She was a VANOC volunteer and helped with many Paralympic School Days and Sport Demos for the Winter Games. Pamela enjoys sharing the knowledge she gains through her experiences and sharing them with

others to show the equality of opportunities available for everyone to participate in sport. She's eager to share her enthusiasm and infectious excitement for the Paralympic Winter Games by carrying the flame during the torch relay.

Debbie Hansen

Debbie Hansen from Surrey has been an athlete her entire life, and for the past thirty years she has worked as a school psychologist where she's been a fierce advocate for the disabled. This past January, Debbie became a Canadian citizen and she finds herself filled with pride for her adopted country and all it has given her family and herself. Debbie says being a torchbearer for the Paralympic Winter Games would embody her love for Canada, for sport and her intention to help create an equitable world for all disabled persons.

Peter Barrington

Peter Barrington from Coquitlam has always admired people who overcome their disabilities and strive to achieve their goals. A marathon runner and avid traveller, Peter has spent time in over 70 countries around the world where he's volunteered for causes such as building houses for refugees in Algeria to building farms for children in Ethiopia. Peter has also volunteered for the BC Summer Games, coached soccer, been a beaver, cub and scout leader and continually encourages youth to engage in activities and be interested and aware of the world around them. He's a big fan of the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and Special Olympics and considers carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay an honour.

Louise Burton

Louise Burton of Armstrong is a physiotherapist who has the honour of carrying the Paralympic Flame in the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay. Louise feels carrying the flame is a validation of her belief in equality for all. She has always been excited by the challenge of finding ways for people to participate in all

Chris Sydorak

Chris Sydorak of Coquitlam lives with a disability and knows the challenges that athletes with a disability face in order to compete in challenges such as the Paralympic Winter Games – he knows that they have to go that extra mile to accomplish dreams like this. Chris is a volunteer in his community, helping to raise money to help other people with disabilities that have the dream of competing on behalf of their country.

Arnold Guanco

Arnold Guanco of Burnaby believes that carrying the Paralympic Flame will be a symbolic affirmation of his determination to help individuals with disabilities and other disadvantaged members of society. Arnold wants to help youth and physically challenged individuals by being an Ambassador in the community to give these people more options to enjoy life.

Faisal Hussainaly

Faisal Hussainaly of Richmond is carrying the Paralympic Flame as a way to show support to all athletes competing in the Games. Faisal believes that Paralympic athletes are amazing individuals who have overcome immense struggles, while others have embraced their talents and helped provide intense training so they may become world-class athletes. Faisal represented Canada in the Golden Jubilee Ismaili Games in Kenya in 2008, as a swimming competitor, bringing home the gold for Canada. Faisal knows about the importance of sportsmanship and respect for all athletes, regardless of culture or background. For Faisal, the Paralympic Games are about more than just winning.

Timothy Travis

Timothy Travis of Vancouver has always wanted to be part of the amateur sports movement, and currently leads an active lifestyle – snowboarding, spending time in a gym and generally taking an interest in fitness. Timothy believes the Winter Games are about dreams and challenging yourself to meet those dreams. He makes an effort everyday to better himself and overcome personal challenges, just like the Paralympic athletes. He feels the flame is the burning embodiment of that spirit and he says that having a small role in bringing that spirit closer to the athletes of 2010 would be the realization of a long-held dream and a further drive to commit to community, health and sport.

Andrew Nord

Andrew Nord of Port Coquitlam has always had a dream to participate in the Paralympic Games, and in 2005 he was close to achieving this dream by volunteering on a committee sponsored by the council of Port Coquitlam where he would be a Paralympic volunteer. Sadly, Andrew was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer in July 2008 and had to resign from the committee to undergo treatments. Now he has the honour of being one of the torchbearers for the Paralympic Winter Games. As he prepares to carry the flame, we hope Andrew is proud to see his dream has been realized, while he helps ignite the dream of our Paralympic athletes.

Trish McKay

Trish McKay of West Vancouver was born with Cerebral Palsy and is all too familiar with the word “No”. Despite the adversity and obstacles she has faced in her life, she has thrived and taken her inspiration to the pool, the running track and the sledge hockey rink. Trish is honoured and deeply humbled to carry the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay, as she makes a tribute to the athletes that have shown that anything can be possible if you put your heart and soul into it. She – and her little service dog – will be riding triumphantly through Vancouver in her scooter, carrying the flame with great pride.

Barrington Timothy

Barrington Timothy of Surrey has been an avid supporter of the Paralympic movement and has volunteered his time in many sporting events over the past decades, including the World Wheelchair Curling Championships and BC Wheelchair Basketball. This year, he’ll be continuing his volunteer work with Medical Services. He says that being a torchbearer in the Paralympic Torch Relay would be the “icing on the cake” and allows him the opportunity to help energize others around him to be excited and thrilled about the Games like he is.

Lynda Sellmer

Lynda Sellmer of North Vancouver has spent many years working with people with disabilities. She’s been involved in the Learn to Ski program for persons with disabilities on Grouse Mountain and has also worked on-call with one of the school districts to help with children with special needs. Later, she worked full-time with the school district as a full-time aid to a young boy in a wheelchair, who lives with spinal muscular atrophy. Lynda enjoyed figuring out ways to include him in everything, especially gym games and other activities. She plans to ask this special boy to join her as she carries the Paralympic Flame, so they can once again work together as a team forging ahead to the future.

Laurie Hawk

Laurie Hawk of North Vancouver has volunteered for two years with the Paralympic School Day program where she helps educate thousands of children with Paralympic values. She feels that carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay would be a great way to honour the athletes that have inspired her.

Ken Keilbart

Ken Keilbart of Langley is an instructor who teaches his students the value of working hard, regardless of their personal circumstance. He believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to be successful and

knows that you just need the confidence to succeed. Ken's nephew has muscular dystrophy so he sees first-hand the struggles he has to face, physically and emotionally. Ken says it's difficult for an able-bodied person to fully comprehend the courage needed by those with physical, mental or emotional challenges to overcome obstacles – and he salutes those who persevere to do their best. Ken is carrying the Paralympic Flame to honour all the people who struggle with challenges in their life, especially his nephew.

Melanie Josephs

Melanie Josephs from Vancouver is inspired by – and believes in – people with disabilities. She is a recreational therapist and works with the Vancouver Park Board in the area of Access and Inclusion to make sure recreation in the community is accessible to everyone. She also volunteers her time with BC wheelchair sports and a variety of other events, such as Wheelchair Rugby Worlds and Canada Cup. Melanie is excited to carry the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay, representing Canada, Vancouver, her community and most of all the people she serves in her work.

Diane Goold

Diane Goold of Vancouver has had a momentous year – she's celebrated her 40th birthday, her 10th wedding anniversary and completed her 10th marathon. Carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay will carry her celebration into 2010. Diane lived in Thunder Bay when Terry Fox had to end his Marathon of Hope. Terry stayed in her father's hotel, and the day he was being wheeled into an ambulance for his journey home was a day that Diane witnessed and has forever etched into her memory. She continues to be inspired every day by his will to carry on in those final days. When she doesn't think she can do something, she tells herself she's doing it for those who can't. For Diane, inspiration is immeasurable.

David Ratzlaff

David Ratzlaff of Abbotsford lives his life with purpose which is to encourage others. He smiles every day, never holds back and shares a number of laughs throughout the day. David won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Bryan Robinson

Bryan Robinson of Surrey won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Trevor Hirschfield

Trevor Hirschfield, of Richmond, was nominated by the Province and will carry the Paralympic Flame during the 24-hour relay in downtown Vancouver.

Gary Steeves

Gary Steeves, of Vancouver, was nominated by the Province and will carry the Paralympic Flame during the 24-hour relay in downtown Vancouver.

Paige Ellis

Paige Ellis of Aldergrove won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after she was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Stuart Wymer

Stuart Wymer of Kamloops won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Doris Olafsen

Doris Olafsen of Langley won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after she was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Kristi Ferguson

Kristi Ferguson of Langley won the opportunity to carry the Paralympic Flame after she was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest. She is a huge supporter of the Paralympic Games and plans to attend a number of events. Kristi is inspired by the Paralympic athletes.

Chance Patmore

Chance Patmore of Chilliwack has a dream to participate in the Paralympic Games when he's older, in Sledge Hockey – which he currently plays – or Wheelchair Basketball. Chance won the opportunity to

carry the Paralympic Flame after he was randomly selected in British Columbia's national torchbearer contest.

Alex Starr

Alex Starr of Vancouver feels that the Paralympic Games tell us that no matter who we are, we can all achieve greatness. He embodies the spirit of the Games, a strong sense of community coming together, and wants to share that with others by carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay.

Cheryl Jim

Cheryl Jim of Vancouver considers herself a much better fan than an athlete, but she feels she carries the values of the Paralympics, which are courage, determination, inspiration and equality. She learned very early on the importance of treating people equally and being open to the differences of others. Cheryl looks at obstacles as opportunities or challenges, and finds a way to overcome them. Cheryl is excited to give back to her community with volunteer work and is pleased to be carrying the Paralympic Flame during the torch relay.

Jennifer Sterne

Jennifer Sterne of Burnaby is dedicated to ensuring that equality and diversity are embraced by the next generation. She feels there is a need to impress upon the younger generation the importance of providing opportunities for all and of treating others with the same basic respect we would ask for in return. She says "when we open our minds and hearts to the simple understanding that we all want the same things, we can finally realize that the spirit of humanity is unquenchable". She knows the value of hard work and determination, along with bumps in the road. A spirit in motion is what she is now – and what she knows every other person on the planet has potential to be. She is honoured to carry the Paralympic Flame.

Kwok Yan

Kwok Yan of Burnaby immigrated to Canada in 1996 from Hong Kong and enjoys living in Canada, with the fresh air, scenery, freedom of speech and the opportunity to learn new things. Kwok hopes to make his sons proud of their father, by carrying the Paralympic Flame in the torch relay. He's also doing this for Canada.

Jenny Hong

Jenny Hong of Vancouver wanted to be a torchbearer because she understands the importance of standing up people with disabilities. She wants to show her support for this community of people, who may find themselves less acknowledged in her community. Through courage and endurance, these members of society often show us that what we – as a society – perceive as unrealistic, are actually realistic. Jenny believes Paralympic athletes make miracles happen because of their perseverance, belief and hard work. Their ability to believe inspires her. Carrying the Paralympic Flame gives Jenny the opportunity to be a true Canadian and stand up for the values of this country, while hoping to inspire other youth to do the same.

Steven Parfeniuk

Steven Parfeniuk of Dundas believes that the Paralympic Games are a testament to the strength and conviction of all athletes – disabled and able-bodied. As a tri-athlete who competes in Ironman with elite athletes, Steven is often asked why he would want to finish a race six hours after the winner – to which he replies “competition is not about winning but about accomplishment”. He constantly reminds himself of the courage of Rick Hansen, Dick Hoyt and Sarah Reinersten, who he feels can inspire any athlete. Steven also has a father with MS, who is in a wheelchair. For his father and his community, Steve will carry the Paralympic Flame.

Wayne Gatley

Wayne Gatley of Vancouver has spent his adult life teaching in schools and universities. He encourages the best from his students, emphasizing the importance of striving to be the best they can be. His classrooms are characterized by compassion, tolerance and respect for one another, and recognition of the value of the individual. Wayne has inspired his students to be understanding, compassionate people who strive to achieve the best ideals of humanity and to use their opportunities to improve the lives of others. Wayne will carry the Paralympic Flame during the torch relay.