

CEC Leadership Workshop - Washington D.C. - July 28 - 30/08

The workshop was intended to bring together CEC executive members from Chapters across Canada and the U.S. who are interested in increasing their own leadership skills and abilities and learning how to promote CEC membership and involvement at the local and international level.

There were 55 delegates including 6 Canadians from provincial Chapters: Brian Kelly - New Brunswick Department of Education; Josette Heslop, Member-at-Large from Ontario, Elaine Lochhead, President and Ken Reimer, Vice President from Manitoba, Dwaine Souveny, President from Alberta and myself, Jan Palmer, Membership Chair from BC. As well Candace Borger, Winnipeg, Chair of the Canadian/U.S. Standing Committee and Diane Vandenbossche, President of Canadian CEC took part.

Most delegates held the position of President or President-elect/Vice-President. I consider myself very fortunate to have this opportunity so early in my involvement with CEC. Although I have attended local meetings, looked at the CEC website and read my Division journals I still had limited understanding of the entire CEC structure and how it benefitted those of us working with individuals with disabilities in Canada and on the West Coast in particular.

The three days were filled with workshops designed to answer those very questions. I learned how CEC began and how it has evolved over the years and continues to evolve. I was particularly interested in the workshops on how to expand our collaboration and partnerships across stakeholders, how Canada fits into the CEC organization and establishing a CAN group (Children and Youth Action Network) which provides a forum for families, educators and other interested persons to focus political pressure to benefit children with disabilities.

We also had some fun - a fondue for all Canadian delegates to get to know one another and an outing to a Washington Nationals ballgame - my first game ever.

I was thoroughly impressed with the warmth, professionalism and knowledge that was extended by both CEC staff and all the other delegates. I truly felt that we were all part of a group that could work together to better the education and lives of children and adults with a disability.

- Jan Palmer, BC CEC Membership Chair.