

## Sport - it's Everybody's Business!

One of the biggest attitudinal obstacles to be overcome by people with disabilities is the myth that they cannot participate in physical activities, especially in sports



On June 20th, Warren's World will officially launch the World Cup Accessibility Challenge at Whistler's Grille and Cafe-Bar, kicking off the mission to discover and celebrate Toronto's Top 20 Most Accessible Sports Bar establishments.

# Abilities Gives the Thumbs Up!



We were humbled to learn that we received the Thumbs Up from Canada's preeminent lifestyle magazine for people with disabilities, *Abilities*.

In the summer 2006 issue, in the Thumbs Up! section, *Abilities* writes:  
Warren Rupnarain

provided some of the most insightful – and entertaining – coverage of the 2006 federal election. As part of an advocacy project for the Ontario March of Dimes, Rupnarain, a student of social work at Ryerson University who has cerebral palsy, made surprise visits to candidates in the Toronto area, quizzing

them about where they stand on disability issues and checking out the accessibility of their offices. He posted reports at [www.warrensworld.ca](http://www.warrensworld.ca), which got over 100,000 hits [during that time]. We're looking forward to Rupnarain's next appearance!

The Advocate is produced & published by March of Dimes' Government Relations Department

MARCH  
OF DIMES  
CANADA



**Co-Editor**  
Steven  
Christianson

**Co-Editor**  
Sheila Casemore

**Art Direction & Design**  
4NPC Studios

**Executive Lead**  
Andria Spindel

**Lead Advocate**  
Warren Rupnarain

**Contact**  
The Advocate at:  
March of Dimes  
Government  
Relations  
10 Overlea Blvd  
Toronto, ON  
M4H 1A4  
Phone:  
416.425.3463  
Email:  
[theadvocate@dimes.on.ca](mailto:theadvocate@dimes.on.ca)

© March of Dimes  
2006

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Ontario March of Dimes, or expressly permitted by law.

# Transportation and Disability: A Personal Viewpoint



By Warren Rupnarain  
Close your eyes and imagine a world without Wheel- Trans. A world where you can come and go as you please and your life is not on a set schedule. For many wheelchair users like myself this dream is a reality with the use of a private wheelchair taxi. There is one major obstacle that turns this dream into a nightmare. THE COST.

The costs of private wheelchair taxis are simply outrageous. I have been a wheelchair taxi user for many years out of necessity and choice. There are times when I have to go to meetings that are not

planned ahead of time and as a result a private taxi must be called. In addition, when I go to social events I sometimes want to stay out longer than originally planned. Private taxis are so wonderful because they provide on-demand service and make a spontaneous lifestyle possible. For this reason, I am very grateful but at the same time the cost of the taxi can often be prohibitive.

The flat rate for most wheelchair taxis is thirty dollars no matter how far the distance. So, for example, if I take a taxi across the street, I would pay around thirty dollars, whereas a person

who does not use a wheelchair would pay about five bucks.

It is my personal belief that people who use wheelchairs should be charged the same price as people who do not use wheelchairs. Wheelchair users are being charged more simply because of his or her disability. As we say in Government Relations, there is always a do-solution to everything. So please send us your comments and feedback on this topic to [theadvocate@dimes.on.ca](mailto:theadvocate@dimes.on.ca). We look forward to hearing from you.



June 12 - President & CEO Andria Spindel presents the degree hood to Warren at Ryerson University convocation



May 18 - President's Reception, Ryerson University. Left to Right: Andria Spindel, Dr. Linda Grayson, Warren, Ryerson President Sheldon Levy



April 4 - Celebrating 25th Anniversary of historic "Obstacles" Report on Parliament Hill. Hon. Senator David P. Smith and Andria Spindel, President & CEO

# Robert Goulet Receives Humanitarian Award

**The Advocate**  
A GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ADVISORY

Robert Goulet's celebrated career as a singer-actor earned him a place on Canada's Walk of Fame this past Saturday. But it is his work in inspiring cancer victims that earned Mr. Goulet a place in the heart of Warren's World.

At a ceremony prior to his rehearsal at Toronto's Hummingbird Centre, Robert Goulet was honoured with the Warren's World 2006 Humanitarian Award.

"I am overwhelmed and very humbled by this very special recognition," said Mr. Goulet, who was clearly moved. "Look at me now...I'm getting all teary."

Warren Rupnarain, inveterate star of the March of Dimes' Warren's World phenomenon, described Mr. Goulet as exemplifying the ideals of courage, inspiration and hope. "Robert Goulet shows anyone with a disabling condition that we can and should reach higher to celebrate the human spirit in the face of adversity. He is a wonderful man that has helped so many," explained Rupnarain.

Robert Goulet was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the mid-1990s. Today, not only has he survived and overcome the cancer, he dedicates countless hours to tirelessly help others during his public speaking and motivational events.



Rupnarain was also clearly moved by the experience. "I was deeply touched that such a celebrated legend was able to take time away from what is clearly a whirlwind, grueling schedule, and talk about charitable work in promoting health and wellness," he said.

And, according to

March of Dimes President and CEO, Andria Spindel, who was on-hand to present the award, Goulet's passion for the cause continues to grow. "This man's work and passion are definitely a source of inspiration for anyone facing adversity. We are absolutely delighted to have had the opportunity to meet

Mr. Goulet and recognize the importance of his work in lending a hand and opening his heart," said Andria while speaking backstage at the Walk of Fame ceremony.

"If I can help even one person by raising awareness, then by God I am going to do it," explained Mr.

Goulet.

While Warren is no stranger to meeting celebrities and public figures, his experience with Robert Goulet was clearly different. "I felt a bond, and I was teary, too, when I listened to Robert talk about his challenge with cancer and his fight to remain positive. This is what Warren's World is all about," said Warren.

Is Warren, the 23-year old who has overcome cerebral palsy himself, leading the new generation of Robert Goulet fans? "I love this guy! The only thing I forgot to ask Robert was if he could sign an autograph for me."



June 3 - Backstage at Canada's Walk of Fame. Warren's World Team, pictured left to right: Bob Burrows, Steven Christianson, Neil Prime-Cooote, Robert Goulet, Warren Rupnarain, Andria Spindel

# Ontario Human Rights – The Devil and the Details

Some advocates approve of the direction; others disagree entirely.

Earlier this spring, the Ontario government introduced Bill 107, *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Code*. According to the Office of the Attorney General, the legislation is designed to improve and strengthen the promotion, advancement and enforcement of human rights in Ontario.

Central to the amendments package are the following:

- Focusing the work of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) to advance public education, systemic advocacy, promotion, research and analysis;
- Having discrimination claims to be filed directly with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario;
- Creating a new Human Rights Legal Support Centre to provide assistance and representation for those seeking remedy at the Tribunal; and

- Creating two new secretariats, an anti-racism secretariat and a disability rights secretariat, within the OHRC, that would undertake research into discriminatory practices, and facilitate the provision of public information and education that help promote the elimination of discriminatory practices.

In a written statement dated April 28th, Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Barbara Hall commented on the proposed amendments as follows: "We are also pleased that the Attorney General will be setting up a broad public consultation process including an Implementation Advisory Committee that will provide input into both the bill and the roll out of a new system. This opportunity for broad public contribution recognizes the need to review the bill in detail to ensure the new law will meet the Attorney General's stated goals to

strengthen the human rights system."

However, Commissioner Hall also notes that "Bill 107 raises significant questions about how these goals will be achieved. In particular, there are a number of concerns as to how the proposed revamped tribunal will be able to move complainants and their claims "fairly, quickly and effectively" through the system, including enforcement, as well as monitoring of public interest remedies.

Another concern is the increased ability of the tribunal to exclude complainants without a hearing through expanded gatekeeping powers."

As reported by Helen Henderson in her Toronto Star article, *Rights debate marred by Chicken Littles*, the AODA Alliance argues that the proposed amendments would "rip out most of the Human rights Commission's teeth." "It [the AODA Alliance] argued that

the logjam that has chronically plagued the system would simply be relocated, leaving Ontarians without the publicly funded expert help they need to navigate the system," Ms. Henderson reports.

Commissioner Hall seems to agree. In her above-referenced letter, she poignantly asks the question, "is this the package which will truly protect and advance human rights in the province?"

The old adage states that the devil is in the details. But in a process that features probably more questions than answers, details, consultation and dialogue are precisely what are required.

As of June 6th, Bill 107 was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. No decisions at the time of The Advocate's publication deadline had been taken to determine when public hearings might be held.

## Brampton Becomes Part of Warren's World

On Tuesday March 7, 2006, the Accessibility Advisory Committee of the City of Brampton passed a motion to support the work of Warren's World in encouraging the Government of Canada to develop a National Disability Act.

The motion, introduced by Committee Member Roland Vermeesch, was presented as a result of Helen Henderson's March 4, 2006, Toronto Star article entitled "Warren's World wants hearing in Ottawa."

The team of Warren's World warmly thanks Her Worship, Mayor Susan Fennell, Honourable Members of Brampton City Council and the Members of the City of Brampton's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Warren Rupnarain, star and lead advocate of [www.warrensworld.ca](http://www.warrensworld.ca) describes Brampton's move as a "tremendous honour."

# National Disability Act - The PMO is Listening

By Bob Burrows –

Email voters have expressed their support for a National Disability Act in the thousands, registering online at [www.warrensworld.ca](http://www.warrensworld.ca) from every province and territory. The emails have gone through the online vote mechanism directly to the Prime Minister's public email address. And many respondents have already begun receiving acknowledgement of their participation in the nation-wide effort.

The response comes from Caroline Weber, Director General of the Office of Disability Issues in the Department of Human Resources and Social Development.

In her acknowledgement, Ms Weber writes: "We appreciate that you have taken the time to share your views and concerns regarding a National Disability Act. I wish to assure you that the Government of Canada is committed to undertaking concrete collaborative efforts intended to achieve the full inclusion and equal participation of Canadians with disabilities in all aspects of life. The Government of Canada recognizes the shared nature of disability issues in Canada, and therefore, will be seeking opportunities

to engage concerned stakeholders, including Canadians with disabilities, in pursuing the development and implementation of a National Disability Act, as set out in the electoral platform of the governing party. As you are aware, the commitment refers to such critical issues as education, employment, housing and transportation."

Warren of Warren's World applauds the move.

"We thank the PMO for forwarding the messages of support to the Office of Disability Issues and acknowledging the voice of Canadians from coast to coast," says Warren. "This certainly represents a good first step!"

I was personally touched by the work of Warren's World and the initial acknowledgement from Ottawa. I offer the following for readers, a letter that I submitted to the team of Warren's World back in January, and one that you will see elicited much emotion:

"The incredible success that the

Warren's World initiative has become is a statement to the strength and courage of Warren and all those who are disabled.

As a parent of two disabled children I have fought back tears as I intently watched and listened to Warren since the beginning of his Warren's World journey. He reminds me so much of my two boys who also have Cerebral Palsy –

must be educated so they can overcome the barriers and ignorance that discrimination has built.

Let's make Warren's Act the first step, for those who cannot, in making accessibility a right for all Canadians with disabilities."

Let's continue encouraging our national government to move forward on this ever so



the fight, the passion, the desire to be an equal, and so obviously the gentle soul. Accessibility is an issue so important to all people in our society. It affects all of us whether we acknowledge it, directly or indirectly. Those of us who have had the privilege of having people with disabilities in our lives understand the need to make these important changes. Those who have not

fundamental measure, one that binds the very fabric of our nation.

You can still send your message of support for a National Disability Act postage-free to the following:  
Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, PC, MP  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Or send your email to [pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

## Across the Nation and Around the World

The March of Dimes advocacy machine known as Warren's World is about to soar across the boundaries of province and nation. Planning is in the works for official events in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Washington, DC. Newfoundland and Labrador will set the stage for an accessibility announcement in collaboration with several leading officials at all levels of government in the province, while Washington will see Warren's World meeting with some of the U.S' top legislative advocates for disability legislation. More details will be officially announced in the coming weeks. "Both initiatives are part of putting disability issues on the front burner of the public agenda," says March of Dimes official Steven Christianson. If you would like to support these or other initiatives of Warren's World, contact us at [theadvocate@dimes.on.ca](mailto:theadvocate@dimes.on.ca)

# Ontario Disability Support Program – A Good Step

The McGuinty government has announced a change in the retroactive payment procedure for receipt of funds from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Prior to this change, recipients would only receive four months of retroactive support payments despite the length of wait time from intake to approval, which is generally at least six months.

The process to apply for Ontario Disability Support Program payments is a long one. It is a two-step process. The first step is to determine whether an applicant is financially eligible. The second step involves the applicant showing evidence that he/she has a proven disability that is expected to last more than one year and that affects his/her ability to provide personal care, function in the community or function in the workplace.

For applicants who are in need of immediate assistance there is the option of

applying for ODSP through an Ontario Works (OW) office and receiving OW benefits while the ODSP application is being processed. This, however, is not an option for everyone and for those applicants whose wait for approval of ODSP is more than six months, the payment of the entire amount rather than only four months in retroactive support is a great improvement.

The elimination of this rule is a small step forward in making a complex system more equitable. The ODSP Act was enacted in June 1998, to provide income and employment supports for persons with disabilities. In the words of the provincial Minister of Community and Social Services at the time, the ODSPA would be “fair and accountable” to people with disabilities and meet their “unique needs.” To date that has not been the experience of many persons with disabilities. Hopefully this and future changes will help in accomplishing these goals.

# Warren Wants You!

Watch the video. Log in. Give it a Green Light. That's Current TV.

Current TV, the pop culture phenomenon that airs “viewer-generated content” and describes itself as featuring stories from the real world, is currently featuring Warren's World real world videos for public viewing. The more people who watch the videos and vote, the more likely it is that you'll see our very own Warren's World on prime-time satellite television.

Sounds creative? It certainly is, and it's a lot fun, as you'll discover when you visit [www.current.tv](http://www.current.tv).

But the message in the content is what's important. The more people who watch, the more the message of accessibility gets out. That translates into even more people understanding, embracing and possibly even promoting accessibility themselves. And that's where the real difference begins.

**Help Warren Here's How**

**Warren's World**

**1** go to [Warrensworld.ca](http://Warrensworld.ca) click on vote now

**2** click on Join

**3** Fill out Join us takes 2 minutes

**4** Watch warrensworld 1

**5** Give it a Greenlight

**6** Watch warrensworld 2-4

**7** Give them all a Greenlights

**8** Email this to your friends

# The Advocate

A GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ADVISORY

## The Warren's World Cup Experience

*The ways we construct sport programs are closely aligned to the ways we seek to educate and socialize our children. Sport has been used as a tool for nation-building and diplomacy. Sport can affect public health and the environment. Indeed, it has been shown that our sense of community has been determined, at least in part, by the nature of sports programs and opportunities that our policies afford.*

*As part of our physical culture, sport contributes to the health, well-being and identity of individuals, communities and the nation as a whole.*

*One of the biggest attitudinal obstacles to be overcome by people with disabilities is the myth that they cannot participate in physical activities, especially in sports. Sport - it's Everybody's Business!*

*[excerpted from Sport in Canada: Everybody's Business, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Subcommittee on the*

*Study of Sport in Canada, Dennis Mills, Chair, December 1998]*

The Fifa 2006 World Cup. More eyes around the globe will watch this month-long tournament, the world's biggest sport event, than any other. This is probably due to the positive nature and attributes of sport in general. But the world primacy of soccer is probably equally attributable to the fact that it is certainly the more inclusive sport. Any group of individuals, in any community or country, can participate.

Participation takes many forms. Millions around the world watch the games with friends and companions in sports bars, pubs, restaurants, bistros, etc. In Toronto, home to the world's most diverse population, participation of this nature forms the essence of comradery, friendship and community-building.

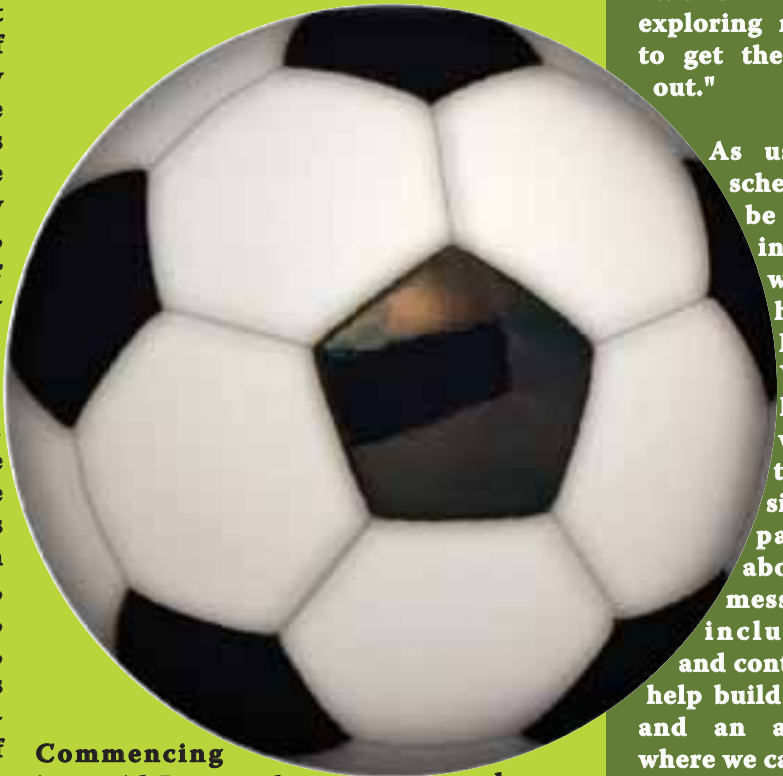
People from every corner of the world

become united through sport. And, in the process, the industry of sport stimulates the revenue engine of our small business communities.

But can everyone participate? This is the question that Warren's World will ask during the Warren's World Cup Experience.

reinforce the message of accessibility and the fact that sport is, indeed, everybody's business," says Government Relations Associate Warren Rupnarain. "It's a positive, very high-road message, and fun with a purpose."

March of Dimes



Commencing in mid-June, the Warren's World crew will hit the streets again. "We'll be visiting upwards of 40 sports eateries in the GTA during the World Cup to

advocacy guru, Sheila Casemore, agrees. "The World Cup is for everybody, and we aim to demonstrate that people with disabilities

are a fundamental part of this equation," explains Casemore. "It's at the level of participation where the importance of the message of accessibility and inclusiveness ring loudest and most meaningfully."

The experiences of the crew will be captured on video and will feature the daily blogs and podcasts that the online community at Warren's World expects. "And look for a few other new and fun features that we'll be incorporating," says Government Relations official Steven Christianson. "We're always exploring new ways to get the message out."

As usual, the schedule will be a grueling one, with long hours. But Warren looks forward to the mission. "I am passionate about the message of inclusiveness and continuing to help build a society and an awareness where we can all participate - socially and economically," explains Warren.

Watch  
[www.warrensworld.ca](http://www.warrensworld.ca)



# Province Funds Business Accessibility EnAbling Change

The McGuinty government through the Ministry of Community and Social Services has announced seven new EnAbling change partnership projects. Madeleine Meilleur, the Minister Responsible for Ontarians with Disabilities announced the initiative on May 31, 2006.

The government will invest close to \$300,000 in the following partnerships:

The Ontario Chinese Restaurant and Food Services Association will receive \$75,000 for an outreach and education

campaign directed to small and medium sized businesses in the Chinese retail and restaurant sector to promote the benefits of increased accessibility.

The Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) and the Ontario Association of Business Improvement Areas (OABIA) will receive \$50,000 to engage small businesses

in improving accessibility, focusing on information and resource sharing, including a competition to recognize some of the leaders of accessibility across the province.

The Ontario Chamber



March 23 - Queen's Park  
Budget Day  
Warren and  
Hon. Premier Dalton McGuinty

of Commerce will receive \$10,000 for a new award to recognize business leaders locally and province-wide who are a catalyst for change.

The Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) will receive \$63,000 to deliver five forums on "Building Momentum for an Accessible Ontario," that will pro-

vide information about the legislative requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, share ideas and discuss best practices.

Innoversity will receive \$60,000 to engage the media industry to promote positive portrayal and participation of people with disabilities in the film and television industry.

Social and Enterprise Development

Innovations will receive \$25,775 to develop and pilot an online e-learning program to increase understanding of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and promoting sector-readiness to small and medium enterprises in northern and rural Ontario.

Link-Up Employment Services will receive \$7,500 to develop a practical, easy-to-use handbook to enable front-line managers to identify, prevent and remove barriers in their hiring practices for people with disabilities.

These partnerships will facilitate the accessibility awareness in the community and create the right environment for change.



April 16 - Toronto's Easter Parade. Warren, Ryerson's Figure Skating Team, and the mascots for the Toronto Marlies, Maple Leafs and Blue Jays



June 12 - Ryerson Convocation. Pictured left to right: Amanda Rupnarain, Davina Rupnarain, Steven Christianson, Doreen Rupnarain, Bob Burrows, Anand Rupnarain, Sheila Casemore, Warren, Neil Prime-Coote



May 26 - Centennial College. The Warren's World lecture on accessibility and advocacy to Centennial faculty

# Warren's World Changing Attitudes



tion. And this young intern, himself, seemed to pass a personal threshold, further inspiring and motivating the energies and passion that fuel Warren's World.

What started as an advocacy project during a specific cause has become rooted in the process and identify of our Government Relations. And what started out as an inspiring and pas-

sionate student intern with a desire to be part of Canada's March of Dimes has grown into a professional of admirable talent, ability and skill.

Congratulations, Warren, on your University convocation. Our journey has just begun.

Many of you were introduced to the March of Dimes advocacy project, Warren's World, in December 2005, when we announced in our inaugural edition of The Advocate that a young Ryerson University intern, Warren, would apply his passion for advocacy in a somewhat unusual way during the 22006 federal

election. This became a defining moment and what would reinforce to all of us on the team that each of our experiences of the human condition constitute the most powerful, mutual learning process of all. Two of the most critical motivators of the human condition are hope and inspira-

# World Cup Accessibility Challenge: Sport – It's Everybody's Business



Join Warren's World on Tuesday June 20th for the World Cup Accessibility Challenge.

followed by the World Cup's 3:00 pm England-Sweden match.



Whistler's Grille and

Café-Bar is wheelchair

Warren Rupnarain of Warren's World and Steve Mastoras of Whistler's Grille and Café-Bar will officially launch the Challenge, which will ultimately determine Toronto's Top 20 Most accessible sport bar establishments. The Launch will be

accessible, and is located at 995 Broadview Avenue (at Mortimer Avenue).

