

Rick Hansen at Guelph University – June 8

Thanks to Carlos Gonsalves who loaned us his wheelchair accessible van we were able to go directly from our presentation at Environment Canada in Burlington to Guelph University and a meeting with Rick Hansen.

There was quite a crowd on-hand to greet Rick as he wheeled in through the front door to a rousing ovation. Several people with disabilities had been invited to relate their experiences; talking openly about the difficulties that confronted them and the invaluable support they had received along the way. In an age of so called "reality" shows and artificiality, it was refreshing to hear from people who had faced their own harsh reality and triumphed over adversity with modesty, perseverance, and determination – truly inspiring, and a tribute to the human spirit.

Then it was Rick's turn and the audience was not disappointed. He delivered his message flawlessly with conviction and humour – his facial expressions and the twinkle in his eye bearing witness to his sincerity and dedication to his mission. If ever you get the chance to see and hear him speak, take it.

After the speeches it was time to meet the man himself and eventually Stephen was persuaded to get in line.

Here's a picture of Stephen with Rick accompanied by volunteers and friends of CharterAbility including the folks from Oakville Trafalgar Hospital who organized the Wheels in Motion event in Oakville on June 12.



From left to right – Rosie Tacoma, Han Tacoma, Stephen Cull, Rick Hansen, Jyl Cunningham, Cynthia Chiu, Melanie Hawtin, Carmel Forrestal, and Alan Tonge.

Oakville's Wheels in Motion Committee were represented by Cynthia (Chair), Carmel (Co-Chair), Jyl (Member), Melanie and Stephen (Ambassadors). Part of the proceeds from last years event went to funding Melanie's new racing wheelchair which she recently put to good use while training in Windsor where she knocked 20 seconds off her previous best. With ambitions to become a member of the Canadian National Racing team it looks as though she is well on her way!

Although he prefers to remain in the background, we finally managed to persuade Alan to appear on our web page. He's been with CharterAbility since its inception in which he was instrumental, putting together an action plan and persuading Stephen to invite people to an inaugural meeting. Behind the scenes Alan has prepared CharterAbility's flyers and content for the web site, the reservations and seating plans for the cruises, agendas and minutes of meetings, the original business plan, outline specification and drawing for CharterAbility's proposed boat – not to mention the accounting and banking – and a few more things besides! As Stephen says, "Where would we be without you Alan?" – to which Alan's standard reply is "A lot further on!"

[Rick Hansen Man In Motion Foundation](#)