

Canada ~ Sam Sullivan: Life in a Wheel

[Film: 17 minutes](#)

"Before my disability there were 10 billion opportunities for me to explore. Now there's probably five billion, far more than I'll ever be able to attempt."

Former Mayor of Vancouver, Sam Sullivan



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 9-12

Civics , Health

Civics - Standard 10. Understand the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

- Know services that are provided by charitable, religious, and civic groups in the community (e.g., health, child, and elderly care; disaster relief; counseling; tutoring; basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter)

Civics - Standard 27. Understand how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities

- Understand the importance for individuals and society of commonly held personal responsibilities such as taking care of one's self, supporting one's family, accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, adhering to moral principles, considering the rights and interests of others, and behaving in a civil manner
- Understand the importance of dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity such as compassion and respect for the rights and choices of individuals

Health – Standard 4. Know how to maintain mental and emotional health

- Know behaviors that communicate care, consideration, and respect of self and others (including those with disabilities or handicapping conditions)
- Know strategies for coping with and overcoming feelings of rejection, social isolation, and other forms of stress

Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☞ *50% of Vancouver's population is from somewhere else, yet Sam Sullivan says there are no ethnic tensions or divisions. Why do you think that is? Describe the ethnic makeup of your community. Are there tensions? Why?*

- ☞ Sam says. “I, as the mayor, wanted to do a lot of things. Some of them didn’t get done. Maybe it is more possible to accomplish those things outside of city hall.” Why do think that might be true?
- ☞ Do you agree with Sam that drug addicts are not criminals or sick? He says they have a “management problem”. What is he referring to? What can’t they manage?
- ☞ The North American Opiate Medication Initiative (NAOMI) provides drug addicts with heroin or methadone. Why is this controversial? Why do they think it will work? What else do they give the drug addicts?
- ☞ Describe what you think it must feel like for a disabled person to be able to sail on the ocean or “trailride” through the mountains.
- ☞ Why do so many people help Sam Sullivan? Do you think he feels guilty having so many people help him?
- ☞ How does it feel to have someone help you do something that you can’t do yourself? How do you think it feels to help someone that can’t do something for them self? Describe a time when you were helped or you helped someone.

Activity
5 billion things to do!
 Make a list of some things that would be important for you to do if you became disabled.
 How could other people help you?
 What could you invent that would help you accomplish your goal?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Excerpt from [Sam Sullivan](#) official website

About Mayor Sam Sullivan

After being elected to Vancouver City Council in 1993, Sam served as a Councillor for 12 years before being elected Mayor in 2005. After accepting the Olympic Flag at the closing ceremony of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino and carrying the 2008 Olympic Torch in Beijing, he became one of the world's most recognized Mayors.

Sam has been an important part of bringing the 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games to Vancouver. From the original discussions in 1996 to the final decisions on funding, venues, city management and the Athletes Village in Southeast False Creek - the largest and greenest housing development in North America.

Sam broke his neck while skiing at the age of 19 and is a quadriplegic. He is the founder of six non-profit organizations that have improved the lives of thousands of North Americans with disabilities. He is a recipient of Canada's highest honour - the Order of Canada - for community service on behalf of marginalized people. He has received the Terry Fox Award for national excellence and the Christopher Reeve Award for outstanding contributions to the community of people with spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities.