

# gizmo

THE TETRA SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA: CUSTOM ASSISTIVE DEVICES

## Balanced by Design: A Collaboration That Keeps a Paralympian Moving Forward

### London Chapter

For Paralympic curler **Mark Ideson**, every step counts—both on and off the ice. A helicopter accident in 2007 left him living with quadriplegia, but that hasn't stopped him from representing Team Canada at three Paralympic Games and competing in events around the world.



Mark with his wife and children in London, Ontario.

*"I'm a wheelchair curler, and I'm lucky to play for Team Canada internationally,"* Mark says from his home in London, Ontario, where he lives with his wife and their two children—a 20-year-old daughter and a 16-year-old son.



Paralympian Mark Ideson competing in wheelchair curling.

He first discovered curling after being inspired by the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. "Some friends had been asking me to come and give it a try, so I relented and gave it a try—and I've loved it ever since. I've been involved in Paralympic curling since 2013, and I've been lucky to travel the world with a second family in the curling community."

Training and physical fitness are a big part of Mark's life, but one piece of equipment at home presented a unique challenge—his treadmill. While he uses a body-weight support system to practice walking, stepping up onto the treadmill itself was difficult.

*"I have some use of my legs—it's very limited—but I can take small steps with a walker,"* he explains. *"I was hoping to improve that with the use of a treadmill and body-weight support system, but I was having a really difficult time standing prior to getting onto the treadmill because the treadmill handrails didn't go far enough back for me to use them to stand."*

## Small Steps, Big Impact

That's when Mark remembered the Tetra Society of North America. "A friend of mine and former teammate had mentioned Tetra years ago," he recalls. "When this project came up, I realized I didn't have many friends with the skills to do this kind of thing, and I knew Tetra volunteers would. It worked out very well."

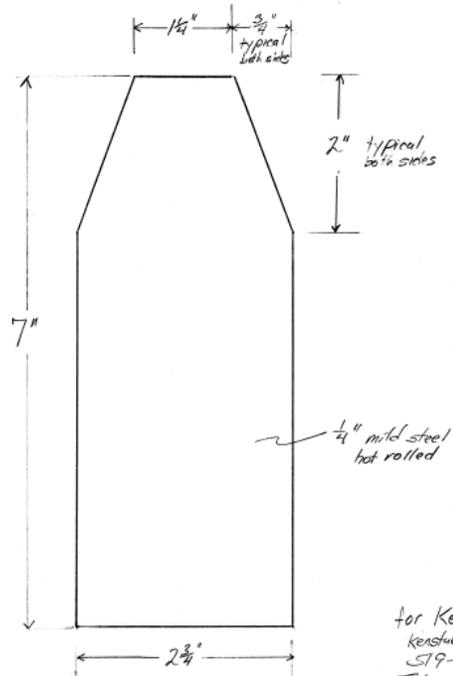
Enter Ken Stubbs, a volunteer with Tetra's London Chapter. Together, they designed and built a pair of 24-inch handrail extensions that start low and narrow to help Mark rise from his wheelchair, then angle upward and outward to connect with the treadmill's original side rails. The low ends are anchored to a floor plate held in place by the treadmill's weight, and the high ends are attached to the treadmill frame using U-bolt plates—a sturdy, customized solution finished with a textured coating for grip.

"It was an excellent collaboration," Mark says. "Ken came to the site, checked out the treadmill, and we tossed ideas around. There was some back and forth—'maybe we should try this'—and Ken had some great ideas. He was very professional and thorough, even with the finishes. It's just like another nice piece of furniture around here."

The project took roughly 50 hours to complete and cost about \$414 CAD in materials. But for Mark, the result is invaluable. "As many people know, living in a chair can present challenges," he says. "It's nice to know there's a team of experts out there willing to go the extra mile to make life just a little bit easier."



Mark testing the adaptive treadmill support system



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Tetra Society  
London Chapter volunteer

As both an athlete and an advocate, Mark believes innovation begins with openness. "I've had the opportunities I've had because of adaptability," he reflects. "If you're adaptable, willing to change, and willing to ask for help, then the sky's the limit."

With his new treadmill setup, Mark continues to train, strengthen, and move forward—one step at a time—proving how collaboration between dedicated volunteers and determined clients can turn barriers into momentum.

If you or a loved one needs an assistive device, please submit a request for assistance on our website. You will be asked to provide some background information about yourself, your disability and your requirements. It helps to have researched commercial devices to be sure that no alternative is available. You will NOT be required to forward additional materials like medical documents.

**[tetrasociety.org/assistance](https://tetrasociety.org/assistance)**

# TETRA WOODWORKING SHOP



## CRAFTING CONFIDENCE: INSIDE TETRA'S WOODWORKING SHOP

Tucked in the sub-basement of Vancouver's Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, a 620-square-foot workshop hums with the sounds of lathes, sanders, and easy conversation. This is the Tetra Woodworking Shop – an accessible, volunteer-supported space where people with disabilities come to learn woodworking, adapt tools, and turn their ideas into finished pieces they can hold, gift, and proudly use.

More than a workshop, it's a place of learning and connection. Participants arrive with a spark – a practical need at home or a creative project they've always wanted to try – and leave with new skills, confidence, and friendships.

Long-time volunteers and instructors model a teaching philosophy that's patient, practical, and encouraging. They don't do the project for participants – they break steps down, problem-solve together, and celebrate each milestone.

*"We encourage people to come with a project in mind and do whatever they can physically do,"* says Jacques, one of the volunteer instructors. *"We don't do it for them. We're here to adapt, coach, and help them do it safely."*

### Safety and Accessibility

Safety and accessibility go hand in hand. Every session is supervised by experienced volunteer instructors who ensure participants can work confidently and safely. Tools and equipment have been adapted for users with limited mobility or hand strength, and safe handling and disposal of supplies are part of every project. One of the wood-turning lathes can even be rotated 90 degrees for wheelchair users, allowing participants to turn bowls or carve comfortably.

### What People Build

Projects range from picture frames, shelves, and small cabinets to artistic wood-burned bowls and planters. On any given day, you might see a first bowl turned on the lathe with a one-handed tool, a picture frame, or a bathroom shelf designed for accessibility.

Some participants work on simple home adaptations or creative pieces that make daily life easier. Projects are small enough to be carried home in one's arms or on a lap.



# TETRA WOODWORKING SHOP

"It's amazing to see the result of your own effort," Jacques says. "When people finish something they've made themselves, the satisfaction is incredible."



## Community and Connection

Beyond the projects, the shop has become a welcoming community. Volunteers – many of them retired woodworkers – share decades of experience while participants learn from one another. Some have been attending for years, forming friendships that extend well beyond the shop walls.

"It's almost like family," says Jacques. "We work together, laugh together, and help each other out."

## How to Join and Get Involved

The Tetra Woodworking Shop is open year-round on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., except on holidays.

**Location:** Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, 818 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver

**Cost:** \$10 per session (covers materials and shop supplies)

**Contact:** [tetrawoodshop@gmail.com](mailto:tetrawoodshop@gmail.com)

The shop includes all the basic woodworking tools and provides the wood and supplies needed. Instructors are always on hand to guide and support participants throughout their projects. Space is limited, so participants are encouraged to email in advance to book a spot – or drop by for a tour to get familiar with the space.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH PARASPORT NOVA SCOTIA Atlantic Region



Zach Dickson, Parasport Coordinator at Sport Nova Scotia, reached out following a series of Community Roundtables with Parasport programs across the province. A recurring theme among participants was the challenge of accessing customized adaptive equipment not available through commercial suppliers.

The Tetra Society was identified as a potential partner, leading to a new collaboration that began with a bocce ball project for a quadriplegic client. The client required a telescopic device that could be extended and retracted and attached to a mouth stick to help adjust the speed of the ball.

"Having a telescopic pointer will really give me more range when adjusting the speed of the ball," said the client. Tetra looks forward to continuing this partnership with Parasport Nova Scotia to support accessibility and participation in adaptive sport.

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## “Back in Rhythm”: A simple pick holder, a big return to music

### Surrey/Langley/Delta Chapter

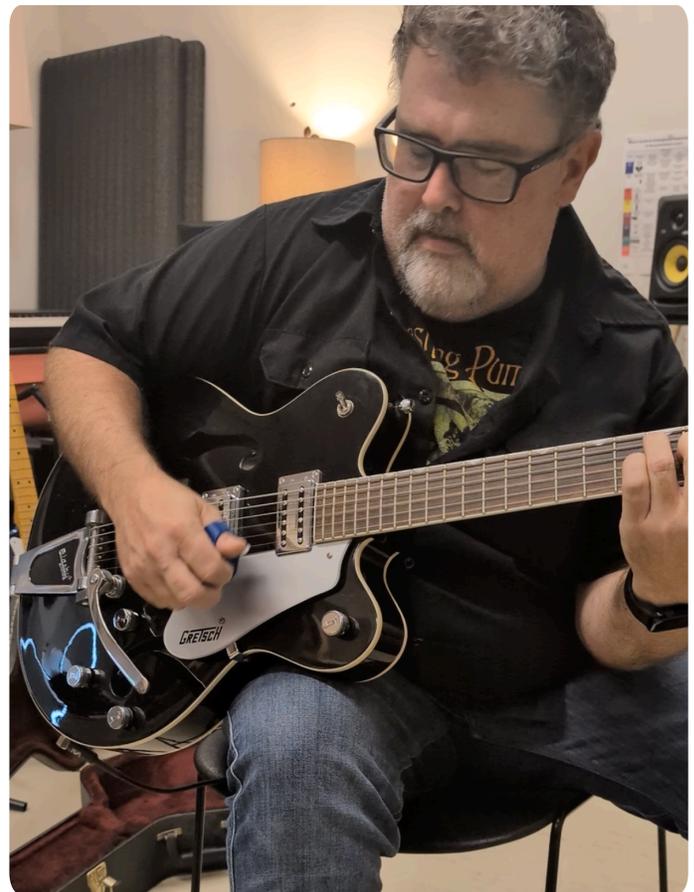
When lifelong guitarist and Vancouver musician Sean Gosse visited the Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS) earlier this year, one barrier stood between him and the instrument he’s played since age 13: he could no longer reliably grip a guitar pick with his right hand.

Bryden Veinot, Senior Program Coordinator at VAMS, opened a Tetra Society Request-for-Assistance with Sean beside him, describing the exact need: secure a standard pick without requiring pinch strength or sustained grip.

The request was matched to Robin de Goutière, a Tetra volunteer and retired engineer who frequently collaborates with VAMS. At Sean’s next session—held at GF Strong—Robin arrived with a palm-sized, 3D-printed pick holder. The device slips over the thumb and forefinger and locks any regular pick in place, allowing the hand to stay relaxed. It slides on and off easily, and the pick can be swapped for different thicknesses.



“It felt like someone flipped a light switch,” Sean said. “All of a sudden I had rhythm back in my hand. I was grinning ear to ear—on the verge of happy tears.”



Sean playing guitar with the customized adaptive pick.

Bryden was there for that first strum. “I usually prepare people for a learning curve with adapted instruments,” he explained. “Not this time. Sean put it on and immediately played parts he hadn’t been able to play for months.”

For Robin, the impact comes from solving the root problem with a simple, functional design. “The challenge was continuous grip,” he said. “Remove the need to grip and the music flows.” He designed and 3D-printed the part within hours—keeping the solution low-cost and easy to reproduce for others with similar needs.

Since then, Sean has returned to regular sessions at VAMS, using the device to play the music he loves and continue his journey as a guitarist.

“Tetra’s value is off the charts,” Sean said. “If you’ve got skills, please volunteer. And if you’re unsure about reaching out—just do it. You’ll be glad you did.”

Robin continues to collaborate with VAMS on adaptive music tools—including foot-operated strummers, slide-guitar attachments, and 3D-printed drumstick grips—each designed to meet a specific need through creativity and precision.

The guitar pick assist is one of his most effective designs: a small, 3D-printed holder that slides over the thumb and forefinger to secure any standard pick. There's no complex setup or retraining—just a design that restores control and comfort, letting the music flow again.

For Sean, this one changed everything. *"I want my experience to mean something for someone else,"* he said. *"If this story helps one musician pick up their instrument again, that's a win."*



Robin attaching a balance pole for a curling client

## PEOPLE SPOTLIGHT



### NEW KINGSTON CHAPTER COORDINATOR - DRYDEN CHADWICK

I joined Tetra because its mission to support people with disabilities really hits home for me, having seen how much adaptive tools can improve independence and quality of life for someone I love. I'm excited to help bring people together in Kingston to create practical, meaningful solutions that make everyday life a little easier for those in our community.



### REGINA CHAPTER - COORDINATOR TERRI SLEEVA

Terri Sleevea is one of Tetra's longest-serving Chapter Coordinators, first joining Tetra in 2003. Active in numerous community groups across the Regina area, Terri is never shy about promoting Tetra at the many events she attends.

Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1984, Terri has become a strong advocate for human rights and disability awareness in her community. Her passion lies in helping people with disabilities overcome physical barriers in their daily lives.

Always going above and beyond for volunteers, Terri organizes an annual appreciation barbeque for the Regina Chapter each summer. Ever inclusive, she opens her backyard to volunteers, their families, and friends—preparing food and even purchasing new games and toys for the children each year.

Thank you, Terri, for always going the extra mile for the Regina Chapter and for Tetra!



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

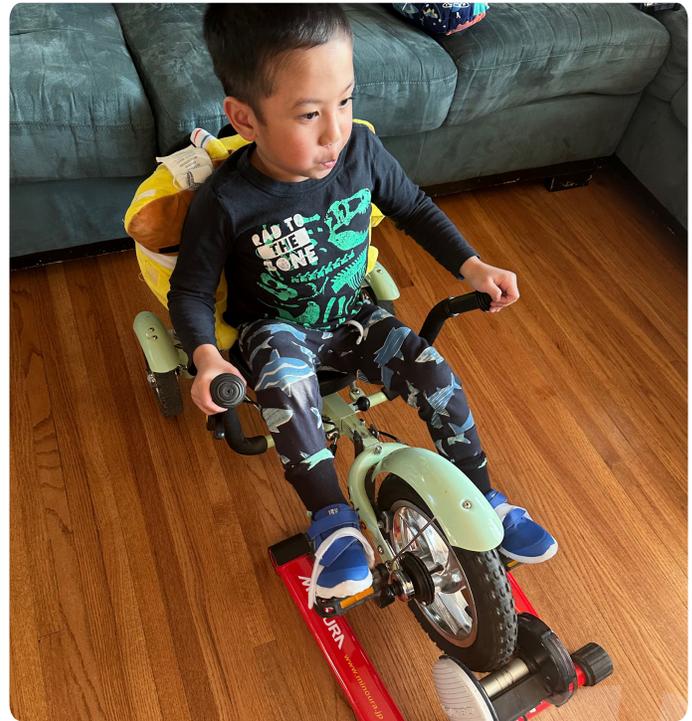
## Exercise Bike Project

### Regina Chapter

In March 2025, the Regina Chapter completed an exercise bike project to assist seven-year-old Leon Candelario, who wanted to strengthen his leg muscles. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Leon had used trike bikes in the past but was looking for one he could use outdoors and also convert into a stationary exercise bike.

Volunteers Riddhi Rathod and Daniel Molder gathered measurements and, after exploring several options, determined that the best approach was to purchase a used trike suitable for Leon's size. They found a Mobo mini trike in Regina, repaired the brakes, added an extension tube to the frame, and modified a stationary exercise bike attachment so it would work with the trike.

The completed project allows Leon to safely exercise both indoors and outdoors using the same adapted trike.



## TetraNation 2025: Every Gizmo Counts

**TETRA  
NATION  
2025**

Every year, Tetra volunteers create hundreds of custom assistive devices.



### How do they do it?

With creativity, teamwork, and your support.



This year, TetraNation is showing you what goes into a device:

- What it costs
- How it's built
- The difference it makes
- How you can contribute



**Our Goal:**  
**\$5,000 to create**  
**10 new gizmos!**

To help us reach this goal, you can **like, share,** and **donate** to the campaign.

With your support, we can continue creating **impactful devices** for our community.

This year's TetraNation campaign once again brought the Tetra community together to celebrate creativity, accessibility, and innovation. Throughout the fall, we highlighted the incredible work of Tetra volunteers who design and build customized assistive devices—each one helping someone live, work, or play more independently.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, this year's campaign raised over **\$1,700**, helping fund materials and tools that make these one-of-a-kind projects possible. Every contribution directly supports the design and fabrication of new Tetra devices that empower people with disabilities to pursue their goals and passions.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who donated, shared the campaign, or helped spread the word. Your support continues to fuel innovation—one gizmo at a time.

Learn how you can support Tetra: [tetrasociety.org/support/#how-to-give](https://tetrasociety.org/support/#how-to-give)

# INDEPENDENCE, FREEDOM & ACCESS

*Tetra is a registered charity that enables people with disabilities to overcome barriers in the physical landscape. We recruit technically skilled and compassionate volunteers who work one-on-one with individuals requiring custom engineering solutions. The completed gizmos empower people with disabilities to live independent and active lives.*

## TETRA THANKS

*Brampton and Caledon Community Foundation  
Calgary Foundation  
Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
Community Foundation for Kingston and Area  
Community Links Association  
Craig H. Neilsen Foundation  
Davies Charitable Foundation  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
Gibson Energy  
Guelph Community Foundation  
Halton Region Community Investment Fund  
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The Bowie Family Fund  
The Georgina Foundation  
The Marion Ethel Kamm and Frederick John Kamm Foundation  
The Province of British Columbia*

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# TETRA SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

*Dedicated to assisting people with disabilities to achieve an independent and fulfilling life, one assistive device at a time*

**Have an idea for a project? Want to know what's possible? Want to overcome a barrier?**

**Here's how to reach us.**

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**F: 604-688-6463**

**E: [info@tetrasociety.org](mailto:info@tetrasociety.org)**

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