

People with Disabilities get “Scrooged” by County

As of September 1 2013, those of us with disabilities are no longer able to travel using Para transit on holidays. Up until that date we were able to be with friends and family, attend religious activities and social activities on holidays using Para transit.

With the rebranding of specialized transportation or Para transit, we are confined to our rooms and homes during holidays.

Para transit stopped at noon on Christmas Eve and was not available until December 27. We had to be in our rooms or homes by noon Christmas Eve and were not able to travel again until December 27. We missed any last minute shopping activities, evening church services, being with our families Christmas day, any activities we wanted to attend on Boxing Day and were in effect abandoned by our community during a time when we should be included in our community.

It is expected that we will be isolated and separated from our families on Family day. We will not be able to attend church, family activities or just get out of our rooms or houses during Easter.

Until September 1 2013 Para transit was available on any holiday.

Why are we now being warehoused and isolated during times when we want or need to be with our families, friends and faith?

The Toronto Star recently ran an article stating what those of us with disabilities already know: that despite the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, more people with disabilities are living well below the poverty line.

Elected officials and staff have been provided with more than enough data that verifies both the economic and social implications of social isolation and poverty for those of us with disabilities in rural communities.

It is our hope that this has been a horrible miscommunication and that we will have the ability to travel on holidays and visit family, friends, attend religious activities as well as social and recreational activities as we have had in the past.

At this point it is not clear where the directive to warehouse and isolate us on holidays came from...only that we are now confined to our rooms or homes on holidays.

Please contact your Councilor and urge them to give us back our independence and the ability to travel using Para transit on any holidays.