

## Rolling again after watery mishap

Several groups came together to find a replacement wheelchair, worth \$70,000, for a local woman.

BY HEATHER COLPITTS, LANGLEY ADVANCE MAY 5, 2011



Linda Harding (floral dress) was helped by Paul Gauthier (left), Rev. Kim Prokopchuk and Zosia Ettenberg (right). Several people and groups worked together to get her a new electronic wheelchair.

**Photograph by:** Heather Colpitts, Langley Advance

Linda Harding loves physical therapy in water. She has cerebral palsy and scoliosis, and cherishes the ability to get out of her wheelchair and enjoy the freedom of movement that hydrotherapy provides.

"It's about the only thing that relaxes me," the local woman said.

But she's been unable to return to the pool since a mishap sent her and her electronic, mouth-controlled wheelchair into the water.

"The housecoat got caught on the [mouth-controlled] joystick and I went into the water," Harding explained.

A caregiver and therapist jumped into the water to unhook the seatbelts and get her out, but the high-tech chair was destroyed.

And because the chair was less than five years old, the provincial government refused to replace it.

Harding, 51, was making do with a manual wheelchair. It hindered her life. She couldn't use her computer, which hooks into her electronic chair.

