



Former B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt (second from left) joins about 60 people, many with special needs, to form a "diversity chain" outside Kelowna city hall. The event marked the proclamation of Community Inclusion Month in the city.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Former B.C. premier links up with 'diversity chain' in Kelowna

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Former B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt was on hand in Kelowna Wednesday to help form a "diversity chain" outside Kelowna city

hall to help celebrate Community Inclusion Month.

Harcourt suffered a life-threatening 20-metre fall off a cliff onto rocks below a few years ago and was left, in his words, a partial quadriplegic. He

has made a remarkable recovery and learned to walk again.

Harcourt was brought to town to speak Wednesday at the Mary Irwin Theatre by Pathways Abilities Society, which helps people with developmental challenges.

He told the group outside city hall that municipalities in B.C. are improving when it comes to providing services and programs for people with "diverse abilities." But more can and needs to be done to "Measure Up," the name of a program he is promoting.

"A lot of people with diverse abilities just need a chance," said

Harcourt, adding while municipalities have the willpower to address the requirements of people in need, including housing the homeless, they need the federal and provincial government to step up with funding.

Community Inclusion Month in Kelowna was proclaimed by acting-mayor Colin Basran who attended the event along with former mayor Sharon Shepherd, who has worked with the Pathways group in the last few years.

The pair are the two leading contenders among the eight candidates running for mayor of Kelowna in November's civic election.