

Focus Newsletter Fall 1997

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Midland: OASIS Agency E.D. Retires

Joyce Hamelin, Midland's irrepressible lady with a penchant to "pull no punches" is retiring after 29 years of outstanding service to Community Living Huronia and her community. Joyce was a breath of fresh air in the social service sector because she was one of the few people who shunned "social service diplomacy" in favour of honesty.

She will be missed by her colleagues and friends. A retirement party was held for Joyce on Saturday, October 4th. People from all over the province attended to say farewell to this wonderful lady.

OASIS Practices Inclusive Participation

As OASIS approaches its first birthday, it seems appropriate to reflect upon this milestone year of rapid growth by outlining a key element of OASIS success; namely, a pro-active approach to including member agencies in communications and work activities.

Examples of this participatory approach abound and go a long way to explain the start-up popularity of this new Provincial Association:

- All member agencies representatives have an open invitation to attend and participate in OASIS Board meetings. Several agencies have taken advantage of this open invitation and are delighted at the workings of a very task-oriented Board.
- All member agencies are contacted at least once a month by an OASIS Board member. This has been the single most helpful practice in our fight against the twin communications enemies of distance and time.
- An OASIS polling protocol has been developed to ensure that all member agencies have opportunities for input on the issues, positions and communiqués.
- A comprehensive communications strategy has been put in place to provide the tools necessary to promote the sharing of information among member agencies and interested individuals. These tools include: an official web site, an OASIS [e-mail listserv](#), a monthly mailing, a quarterly newsletter, a Best Practices database, and an automated media release system.

Legislation - Pay Equity Reinstatement

By Gordon Anton

In a recent development, the provincial government has indicated it will honour a court ruling to reinstate "Pay Equity" as it was introduced by the Rae government some years ago. This is good news for women in general and for the social services sector in particular. Not only are women generally underpaid, it was obvious, by virtue of those agencies required to do proxy comparisons with other sectors, that people in ACL's generally are unfairly paid compared to other sectors within the larger government umbrella.

The reinstatement of "Pay Equity" may manifest itself in a continuation of the 1% increment per year. Under this scenario it will take many years to reach equity. However, it is a step in the right direction.

It is important for the government to remember that Pay Equity has nothing to do with "Cost of Living Adjustments" (COLA). COLA's have been frozen for several years. Even with inflation low, salaries have lost about 7% purchasing power during this freeze.

This cannot continue any further without causing people to resist the government in the same way that doctors, teachers, and others have already done. Moreover, because the COLA freeze is across the board, it more seriously harms those sectors which have already been unfairly paid in the system.

The government would be well advised to develop a variable COLA so that they have an ability to

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selectively promote more equity in a cross sector fashion within the larger transfer payment system.

Trillium Foundation Gets More \$\$\$

Taken From Community Professional
Fall, 1997

The Trillium Foundation has announced that more funds will be available for distribution to promote "all the aspects of healthy communities" in Ontario. The money will come from the introduction of video lotteries as announced in the May 1996 budget. Ten percent of revenue generated will be funneled to Trillium for distribution.

In addition to providing more funds for Trillium to meet its goal of finding new ways of creating opportunity, caring for the most vulnerable, encouraging personal contribution and stimulating civic engagement, the monies will also be used to fund recreation, sports, arts, the environment and other social services.

Most details, including the locations of the gaming casinos, have yet to be determined, however Trillium plans to launch their new programs mid-winter. The foundation expects to receive revenues of up to \$100 million per year once the casinos reach maturity in their operation.

OASIS Member Agencies Number 21!

The latest entries to the [OASIS membership](#) fold are Cambridge Association for the Mentally Handicapped, Kincardine and District Community Living and Kingston and District Association for Community Living. This brings the growing list of new agency members to 21 in less than one year of operation.

This rapid rise in interest and participation is attributed to, among other things, the prospect of an inclusive strategy of member agency involvement ([see article on Page 1](#)).

OASIS has set out to develop a network of member agencies in order to facilitate the sharing of information and the lobbying of government with a single voice receptive to the views of agencies as they go about their business of supporting people with developmental challenges.

Featured Best Practice - Rights and Responsibilities

Each edition of Focus will feature one or two submissions from the "Best Practices" database located on the umbrella Internet homesite at <http://www.oasisonline.ca/systems.html>. Agencies are encouraged to use this information and systems base as a tool with which to assist one another.

The North Bay Association for Community Living wanted to ensure that all the individuals served were made aware of their rights. In order to do this, they created both a video and booklet outlining people's rights and responsibilities.

A staff committee developed a video and a booklet outlining rights together with the responsibilities of all individuals. Both the booklet and the video are made available to individuals when accessing any service of the North Bay Association for Community Living.

The video was made through a co-operative effort of the North Bay Association for Community Living and staff and students from the Canadore College Broadcasting, Television and Video Program. North Bay's own individuals acted in the video which depicted situations where rights were being respected and responsibilities accepted.

The booklet presents the same information as the video, but the information is presented in four different ways. Words, picture symbols, photographs, and examples of activities were used so that all levels of comprehension and all learning styles were respected.

Technology Corner - Job Hunting on the 'Net

Excerpts Taken From Abilities - Fall, 1997
By Veronica Leonard

Any person with a disability can tell you that disabilities are not an easy sell. In the language of the employment centre, "job hunting itself is a full time job." But it's a job that is not accommodating to a great many workers with disabilities. Lack of accessibility, application forms that are in fine print, and unhelpful reception staff are all stumbling blocks in a job search.

Lately, the playing field has begun to be leveled. The Internet is a new avenue for job hunting, and the often technologically savvy worker with a disability has an advantage. From the comfort of your home computer, community library or resource centre, you have access to current employment listings. Every worthwhile job is being routinely posted on the Internet.

The Nova Scotia regional home page for Human Resource Development Canada, <http://www.ns.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>, is one of the best websites for job searching in the country. It will link you not only to job

banks in most of the major Canadian cities, but also to information on Canadian mega-projects, market trends and careers. This site includes hot links to the want ads of many major Canadian newspapers that have on-line databases.

A special service of the Public Service Commission Homepage is Career Alert, which allows you to enter a selection of key words describing your skills or the work sought. Notification of all job opportunities in the federal public service with these specification will be e-mailed to you weekly or daily, as you request. As many PSC jobs are only open for a 24-hour period, this service gives an advantage to the Internet job seeker.

The Canadian Council of Rehabilitation and Work has its own website at <http://www.ccrw.org>. It has created a sub-program called the Wide Area Employment Network. This program allows job seekers and employers to input their resumes and job orders at specific sites to create an inventory of skilled workers with disabilities and work opportunities.

The Internet guarantees fairness to all job seekers. They are screened for follow-up based solely on their skills and abilities. As free Internet access becomes available at libraries, schools and employment centres, the door is opening to all.

Other Interesting Sites

Canworknet - A compendium of employment and recruiting sites.

<http://canworknet.ingenia.com/user/link.html?newcatno=1>

The Ontario Employment Service Directory - Directory geared toward employers, employees and job seekers with disabilities, listing employment resources available across Ontario.

<http://indie.ca/abilities/>

Gateway to Diversity - Abilities in the Workplace - Information focusing on people with disabilities in the workplace. For employers, employees and job seekers.

<http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca/enggraf/ability/ability.html>

Member Agency Highlights

Barrie & District Association for People with Special Needs - B.D.A.P.S.N. instituted a new award at their Annual General Meeting held on June 10, 1997. The Community Partner of the Year Award is given to a worthy individual/business/group who has been especially supportive of the Association's efforts. The 1997 award went to Dong Ki Lee and the Izumi Japanese Restaurant in Barrie. Mr. Lee has invited both consumers (and their families) and volunteers to enjoy complimentary meals at his restaurant. He has plans for an ongoing relationship with the consumers of B.D.A.P.S.N.

Brantford and District Association for Community Living - After successfully completing their 1992/93 Strategic Plan, it was time to decide how to determine the 1997-2000 Strategic Plan and Goals. It was decided to use a different approach by accessing the resources of Accreditation Ontario to develop working goals for the next few years. They now have "12 Outcomes" with measurable objectives and timeframes. The focus of this Strategic Plan moves off the development of services and focuses on the "outcomes" of people.

Cambridge Association for the Mentally Handicapped - Goals set for 1997 fundraising efforts are the Flowers of Hope Campaign in May, the Second Annual Rails-to-Trails Ride-or-Walk-a-Thon September 21, and a raffle for a 3 day trip to Las Vegas plus secondary prizes. The dependable revenue received from the Bingos and sale of Nevada tickets has provided furnishings, repairs and maintenance to many Association properties and programs. As forecast last year, The Cambridge Wooden Toy Company concentrated on retail outlet sales only versus the wholesale market. ARC Industries contract work and the Wooden Toy Company sales exceeded the budgeted amount by \$36,000

Collingwood Community Living - CCL's Vocational Services set up a booth at this year's Collingwood Fall Fair. The booth was to heighten public awareness of the aim of this program. They offered balloons and fridge magnets, as well as a 20 minute video highlighting vocational pursuits, and a business card raffle. The Fall Fair Board also employed our "Green Team" to work on the maintenance crew.

Norfolk Association for Community Living - On June 26, the Simcoe & District Chamber of Commerce, Special Olympics and NACL hosted Dave Shannon's stop in Simcoe during his cross Canada journey to promote disability awareness and raise funds for the Dave Shannon Cross Canada Foundation. Dave started his journey in Newfoundland on April 1, 1997 and completed his tour on November 1 in Vancouver. At a reception held for Dave, he spoke highly of the great strides the Association has made to promote the abilities of people with disabilities and efforts toward full inclusion. He was especially intrigued by the creative career support options developed over the past years. Dave's visit was a wonderful opportunity for the people supported and the Association. We wish Dave all the best of success in pursuing his goal!

Windsor Community Living Support Services - They are actively involved in the community planning process for ten people returning home to Windsor from Southwestern Regional Centre. Shown in the photo are four individuals coming to Windsor, their families, SRC community planning facilitators, and WCLSS staff after one of the planning meetings. Everyone is encouraged to join in the planning. The

four men moved into their new home shortly after this picture was taken.

CHOICES Inc. - In anticipation of some building renovations, North Wentworth moved some individuals and staff into alternate day program sites at two group homes. This has been a wonderful change for many individuals who benefit from a quieter and slower-paced lifeskill program. Those wishing to do contract work, with a focus on vocational training, remain at the Westfield location where everyone is learning how to run a recycling plant! The Community Involvement program continues to produce amazing results for individuals who want to work or volunteer in community settings.

Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living -Cay Shedden was presented with Ontario's Medal for Good Citizenship for her commitment to people with developmental disabilities on June 18, 1997. In 1971, Cay was concerned about the lack of programs for her son John and other children with severe developmental disabilities. She approached then-Premier Bill Davis and by the end of that year, with Cay's perseverance, the Province announced a day-care grant requiring 50% of services be provided to children with disabilities.

Issues - Repatriation From Facilities Halted

*Taken from Fall, 1997
Community Professional
Nancy Mouldsdale*

"This is another victory in our struggle to protect our members and keep good jobs in the communities." (Leah Casselman, President Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) as quoted in an August 1, 1997 press release.

What is the cost of these "good jobs"? Over what battle is OPSEU claiming victory? On August 1, 1997 a provincial arbitrator ruled that there should be a moratorium on the repatriation of individuals with developmental disabilities who are moving out of six provincial institutions into the community.

Residents of Southwestern Regional Centre, Cedar Springs; Midwestern Regional Centre, Palmerston; The Adult Occupational Centre, Edgar; Huronia Regional Centre, Orillia; Prince Edward Heights, Picton and the Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls can not go ahead with planned moves back into the community until at least after September 15th, according to the arbitrator's ruling.

The ruling came about as a result of a grievance filed by a Prince Edward Heights employee. It was alleged that "reasonable efforts" had not been made by the province of Ontario to find jobs for the institutions' employees at the agencies where the individuals would not be receiving services.

The arbitrator found that this may, in fact, be the case and issued a consent order on June 2, 1997 that included a 60-day freeze on repatriation. During that time the government was required to prove that it had made reasonable efforts. Unable to satisfy the arbitrator, the moratorium was issued.

An official with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) has indicated that the next date to meet with the arbitrator has been scheduled, but that it is after the 15th of September. The official said that while the ministry remains committed both to upholding its contract with OPSEU, and to returning individuals with disabilities to the community, "reasonable efforts" has never been defined or challenged before, so there is uncertainty about how or when this issue will be resolved to the arbitrator's satisfaction.

So back to the original question - what is the price of OPSEU's victory? It would seem as though the union would have individuals remain in institutions for the sole purpose of providing its members with "good jobs".

According to Judy Vellinga of the Elmira and District Association for Community Living, her agency has just completed construction of a new home, hired staff and made commitments to three individuals, one from the Southwest Regional Centre and two from the Midwestern Regional Centre. The Association has now been told that these individuals can't move out of the institution until this issue is resolved. Elmira, which has been very pro-active in hiring staff from the institutions is understandably upset at this seemingly "hostage" situation.

This situation is also affecting other agencies as well. Elmira is not the only organization that has built or purchased homes. In at least one case that we know about, these preparations were made in advance of receiving the capital funds from MCSS, only to discover that the individuals are forbidden to move. Complicating the situation is the fact that nobody at MCSS can tell them when they will receive any of the promised money. This in spite of the fact that the agency has been under considerable pressure from the ministry until now to speed up the process. This is of grave concern to the organization which has used some of its own cash reserves to cover these projects.

While our MCSS official insists there is a process for exceptional cases, this does not appease the agencies, families or individuals being affected. It seems that an appeal to the arbitrator regarding two gentlemen who were due to be repatriated the week of August the 18th has resulted in one of the men being exempted from the ruling, but not the other. Far from being reassuring, this speaks to the fact that OPSEU and the arbitrator are now in control of people's freedom.

Many people in the field are concerned that if no one stands up for the rights of these individuals,

OPSEU and the ministry might be engaging in their legal battles for quite some time. Local chapters of People First have voiced their objections to the ministry and OASIS has also expressed its dismay.

So it would appear that the cost of OPSEU's victory, and one it seems it is quite willing to have others pay, is that of basic freedom. Never mind the fact that these individuals have been working long and hard for this transition, or the massive preparations and expenditures undertaken by agencies, but for the sake of "good jobs in our communities", they are willing to deny people's basic right to decide where they will live. I just wonder what kind of communities OPSEU is envisioning.

Featured Web Site - The Canadian Abilities Foundation

The mission of the Canadian Abilities Foundation is to provide information, inspiration and opportunity to Canadians with Disabilities. As depicted above, they accomplish this through their people (Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers), the internet, an Ability Magazine, as well as other services.

Their web site is located at <http://indie.ca/abilities> and found there are issues of the Abilities Magazine as well as information on their Internet Services including development, hosting and references.

The Canadian Abilities Foundation, by virtue of its position in the disability mosaic, is able to generate a number of products and services of interest to people with disabilities and for those who work in the disability field. Here are a few examples:

- Directory of Disability Organizations in Canada
- International Directory of Disability Media
- International Calendar of Disability Events
- Women's Resources (a national listing of publications and services)

Abilities is Canada's foremost cross-disability lifestyle magazine that is read by people with disabilities, their families and professionals. It is distributed nationally and internationally. The publication is available in regular print, on audio-cassette, in large print, on a computer disk and clear language. It is also produced, in part, electronically on the Internet.

If your organization is hosting an upcoming conference or special event that is related to disability, they would contribute copies of Abilities magazine. Abilities can be a valuable addition to the information and resources you are distributing at your event.

Contact information is as follows:

Canadian Abilities Foundation
 489 College St., Suite 501
 Toronto, Ontario
 M6G 1A5
 Tel: (416) 923-1885
 Fax: (416) 923-9829
 E-mail: able@interlog.com
 Website: <http://indie.ca/abilities>

Letters to the Editor

The following is a collection of thoughts about "Making Services Work for People" put forward by the Focus editor in an open letter intended for consideration by MCSS, volunteers, families and agencies. These ideas have been gathered from discussions with people in the system and are not necessarily OASIS positions.

- Agencies in different parts of the province support single point access by county for people with developmental disabilities. This can and has been done without added costs to the system and need not entail the setup of a centralized agency.
- Agencies, volunteers and families support the establishment of cost effective administrative systems. Some suggest that admin cost benchmarks could be determined and agencies could be given a time frame to comply with such standards but there must be allowances for the fixed cost discrepancies from community to community.
- There is tremendous support for the need to eliminate redundancy and waste. A process could be put in place for agencies to explore with one another areas where they can share human and material resources. These efforts, however, must be specific and developed agency by agency where it is practical and desirable. Such measures would be propelled to greater or lesser degrees by the admin cost benchmarks alluded to above.
- It seems to be commonly agreed that it is important to give some priority in the system to early intervention. However, funding envelopes for children and adults must be kept separate. Both are critical in their own respective contexts. If hard political choices have to be made, one could see where funds for the arts or sports might be diverted to starving children or aging population issues or people with developmental handicaps.
- Most agencies are not supportive of the delineation between essential supports and investment supports. If the purpose of this delineation is to target funds to where they are most needed, it quickly becomes apparent that those in need of ongoing non-crisis support would become crisis cases in the system. On the front lines, this is seen frequently when people in need of support refuse it voluntarily or are pushed along the trail of independence

prematurely. These approaches will often cost the system more because individuals end up in emergency respite, mental hospitals, police services, counseling supports and so on.

- There is little or no sense in forcing mergers or amalgamations of entire agencies or agency functions unless it can clearly be shown on an agency specific basis where real cost savings and quality of services can be gained. The most obvious issue is the fact that in most cases the need to redress salary disparities between agencies would more than negate any savings. More important is the very real fact that the volunteer system and community responsiveness to families and staff would suffer immeasurably.
- There is no support for planning for and merging the budgets and services of children generally with people with developmental disabilities. These are two distinct service priorities each of which is critical to the whole. Strategies, programs and needs are very different.
- It appears that the "Making Services Work" process is insensitive to existing partners in the system. Existing agencies and planning committees were all but side stepped across the province. This will inevitably have impact on the future sense of trust and integrity which stakeholders invest in the system.
- It would be penny wise and pound foolish to weaken agency admin structures through wholesale attempts to eliminate resources. Rather, there must be a logical and agency specific approach where there is obvious fat in the system. This approach will by necessity take more time to analyze and implement.
- People in the system are very concerned that the "Making Services Work" committee time frame is unworkable. Due to slow summer startups, Christmas periods and other logistical issues involving volunteer and meeting times, most committees will only have three or four months at the most to deal with a range of complicated issues. In cases where this is true, it will backfire with solutions which could be costly, unworkable and defragmented.
- MCSS doesn't seem to have a vision of what should exist in communities and doesn't seem to have the means to find out what already does exist. There are many divergent approaches across the province. "Making Services Work for People" appears to be grasping for straws.
- There appears to be self fulfilling prophecies within "Making Services Work for People" - administration is bad, prevention is good, money must be found to reinvest in priorities, time frames must be met. These positions are expressed in absolutes, rather than recommending that a community audit of services be undertaken with all parties involved with children and individuals with developmental disabilities being surveyed to determine existing service range(s), entry points and needs.
- MCSS has not taken into consideration the volunteer hours provided within agencies, or the fund raised dollars that are generated to make services go farther. Loss of Agency identity (through mergers) could have a dramatic impact on services presently offered.
- There should be several opportunities within specific communities to merge two or three smaller agencies (budgets of approximately \$500,000 or less) funded by MCSS with a larger agency. Even in these cases, amalgamation needs to be a viable specific inter-agency solution and not a broad brush attempt by MCSS to save money with no regard for consequences.

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