



Community Living
VICTORIA

From Our Executive Director - June 2011

It has been a very busy time for Community Living Victoria. We provide direct supports for 252 people and to many others through indirect supports. Our Host Agency program has grown dramatically in the past year and we now support 51 individuals in Home Share and 22 through individualized funding.

Many of you know that service redesign has been a strategy used by our funder, Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), to meet their budget pressures. However, the reality is that while support needs may change over a person's lifetime, they will require support throughout their lives. There are growing waitlists for services. In addition to requiring agencies to find efficiencies in order to give back money to CLBC, and to shift the focus to employment in day services, service redesign was initiated also to look at people who are currently living in group homes and to explore with them and their families to see if they would consider a different living arrangement. In late September, CLV met with a group of families to discuss whether they would be interested in another residential option, such as Home Share. Many of our parents are aging, as are their children, and they were not interested in a change for their family member.

This is not just happening to Community Living Victoria. It is happening all across the province. The families and individuals do what they do so well, that is, they spoke up and as a result of their advocacy, attracted media attention. The message from CLBC did soften. CLBC was able to meet their savings targets for 2010-2011 and recovered \$25 million dollars last year, some of which they redistributed into reducing waitlists for those people who had no services at all.

Our Helgesen home in Sooke was closed on April 1, 2011, as two of the three people who lived there passed away in October and December. The remaining resident required a one-level, accessible home and as we did not have any vacancies, he moved at the end of March to a home operated by another agency. Although the individual's transition to his new home went very well, it is a shame that the Helgesen home which is fully accessible is sitting empty. CLBC does intend to keep the home for future use. I acknowledge what a difficult time it has been for everyone involved and commend them for their efforts to make the transition go as smoothly as possible. The loss of unionized positions has meant that a lot of bumping has gone on throughout the agency in the past few months. The irony is that by closing a home, although through natural attrition, the pressure was off of Community Living Victoria. We feel that CLBC is listening to us and although there may be fewer staffed homes in the future, it will happen naturally as it did with Helgesen.

With the new budget, there was only a 1% increase for Community Living BC. Further savings are expected to be recovered this year from agencies. There are growing waitlists for services including families with children transitioning from high school who are being told there is nothing available for them. CLBC's funding crisis has been brought up in the legislature and the new Minister of Social Development has tried to defend the budget. He invited the opposition to send him information about the families and individuals waiting for service. It is a great opportunity for families who are waiting for services to email Minister Bloy - SD.Minister@gov.bc.ca, talk to your MLA, contact BCACL at bcacl.org for more information or Bev Kissinger, CLV's Family Support Worker, bkissinger@clvic.ca

CLV underwent our third successful CARF survey in January, 2011. Although it was difficult preparing for our survey through the holiday season, we were very pleased with the results and received a full three-year accreditation. We had some suggestions for improvement which were fully expected but no recommendations in any area of service delivery.

In our efforts towards continuous quality improvement, each year we produce a Measurable Outcomes Report (MOR). This comprehensive report includes effectiveness and efficiency goals for all of our services. It also incorporates the results from the Satisfaction Surveys from our major stakeholders including families who receive direct services, the people we support, our staff, employers, and those who utilize our family support services. This year, we also got feedback from our Host Agency families and individuals. The MOR is available on our website.

The satisfaction surveys highlighted how important our Family Support program is to the 450 families who use our services every year. CLV does not receive any government funding for this program. We are very pleased that it is supported by a United Way grant until December and that a gaming grant will see that the program continues to be funded in the future.

The board of directors, management team, staff and key stakeholders participated in a Strategic Planning session on May 25th and 26th. Thanks to those of you who provided your feedback through the on-line questionnaire. Our strategic plan will soon be available on our web-site.

The collective agreement expired on April 1, 2011 and to date there has not been a successful resolution or agreement reached. The Association of Unions held a strike vote which came up with 82% of members voting to strike. Everyone is hopeful that a successful conclusion can still be negotiated but the possibility of job action exists. We are currently negotiating our essential services levels.

I'd like to acknowledge the work of our Foundation. They are an amazing group of people who raise funds for Community Living Victoria. The Foundation held a very well-attended thank-you breakfast for our sponsors on May 11th. This was an opportunity to say thank you to our sponsors and to connect them to Community Living through the presentations of family members, self-advocates and employers. This year, the Foundation provided significant funds for capital needs in our homes and programs with the proceeds from the Michael Kaeshammer concert in November. We are looking forward to this year's event which promises to be spectacular.

The Foundation has also refreshed their media campaign "I'm Community Living" with some new advertising which you may have seen on buses and in the newspaper. These efforts continue to successfully raise the profile of Community Living Victoria.

The months ahead promise to be challenging on all fronts. We will continue to count on the dedication and commitment of our leadership team, our two boards of directors, our staff, families, and our membership to ensure we are providing quality services and supports to people with disabilities and their families.