



From Our Executive Director - March 2011

Following is a copy of the speech that our Executive Director delivered on March 26th at the Community Social Services Walk in Victoria. The walk was part of Community Social Services awareness month in March.

www.communitysocialservicesmatter.ca

Good morning. I am the executive director of Community Living Victoria; my roots in the movement go back to my own family and brother who has a developmental disability. I know that families have fought over the years to ensure that the supports and services are in place so that their family member has a decent life. So I know the difference that a strong social service sector makes from both perspectives.

People with a developmental or intellectual disability have a range of ability – some require little support, while others need a lot of support throughout their lives.

There was time when people with developmental disabilities were invisible, isolated from community and living in institutions. We have come a long way. Today, people with developmental disabilities are participating in their neighborhoods, communities, schools, and workplaces. Like everyone else, they have hopes and dreams and the desire to contribute and belong. This is about social justice; this is about citizenship. We have developed a strong social safety network, a strong support network and infrastructure to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, enjoys their right to live in the community and participate as a full citizen.

We all benefit when people with developmental disabilities are part of our community. We all benefit when people with developmental disabilities live and participate as a full citizen in their community. A diverse community is a rich community. Availability of social services improves the quality of life for us all.

The incredible work that community support workers do – not only in community living, but throughout the social services sector is good for us all.

We often hear about the importance of good health care and education and how critical that is to a healthy province. They are critical, but the 3rd leg of the stool is the delivery of vital social services. Together that makes us strong and healthy. That ensures that our communities are strong and healthy. There are many people waiting for service. I have seen the devastating impact on individuals and families who do not receive the support they need in a timely way. I have seen the difference it makes when an individual and family receives the support they need; services that make a difference. Community social services matter.

So today I celebrate you all and the significant contribution that you make to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have a good life in our community. Today I celebrate the importance of strong, accessible social services. Community social services matter.