



## ***OASIS Newsletter September 2016***



Developmental service agencies  
building inclusive communities,  
enabling healthier lives for Ontario's  
most vulnerable.

**The OASIS newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter keeping you up-to-date on our member agencies and the Ontarians they serve.**

**This month's edition includes:**

- OASIS' response to the Ombudsman's report on adults with developmental disabilities
- OASIS' response to the final report by the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee
- Innovative independent living solution
- MCSS housing initiative project

## AGENCIES MATTER

# OASIS responds to the Ombudsman's report on adults with developmental disabilities

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario released [Nowhere to Turn](#), a special report in response to complaints from Ontario families of adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis situations.

In a recent [media statement](#), OASIS acknowledged the Ombudsman and his Office for its in-depth research, and demonstrated concern for developmental services in Ontario. OASIS also acknowledged the Ministry of Community and Social Services for its commitment to addressing the report's recommendations and to collaborating with community agencies.

The report called for several recommendations. One is an increase in support systems for people in crisis situations. Another is an increase in the availability of data and statistics on the developmental services sector.

OASIS recognizes the need for long-term solutions to address waitlists for developmental services and for adults in crisis situations. However, OASIS also believes that more can be done preventatively to anticipate and avoid crises from happening in the first place. OASIS also recognizes the importance of having accurate and current data for system planning, however, additional higher quality analysis should be done to identify the catalysts that lead to crisis situations involving adults with developmental disabilities.

OASIS will continue to collaborate with its partners to develop meaningful strategies that brings together both qualitative and quantitative data and statistics, thereby closing gaps in the current system. As community experts throughout Ontario, OASIS knows that decisions must be based on more than numbers alone, and take into consideration both family and community situations.

## **OASIS responds to the final report and recommendations by the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee**

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Ontario took an important step in addressing the wage gap in Ontario by releasing a [report](#) on its final recommendations. OASIS released a [media statement](#) that applauded the government for taking steps to strengthen economic opportunities for women, and for recognizing the crucial hidden intersection between developmental services, and the informal care economy that provides for the thousands of Ontarians who are currently on wait lists for formal developmental services.

OASIS had submitted feedback throughout the consultation process and is pleased to see that, in line with our submitted concerns, the report acknowledges that there are many complications in Ontario's proxy method of pay equity, and furthermore, recognizes the variations in pay within the developmental services sector. In addition, the report brings to light that female dominated sectors are struggling to meet the mandated raises, thereby failing to attract talent without appropriate wage enhancements. This difficulty to attract and retain middle management talent is something that all our agencies understand.

Several of the report's recommendations call for increased consultations between the Ontario Government and various relevant government sectors, to develop a pay equity strategy that works for all. OASIS recognizes that the gender wage gap will not be closed because of any single solution, and will therefore continue to work with the Government of Ontario to develop a multi-faceted approach to closing the gender wage gap.

OASIS has encouraged the Government of Ontario to consider its gender wage gap implementation strategy on four guiding principles:

1. Collaboration Matters: Discussions must continue to include the full spectrum of voices that reflect the diversity and complexity of this issue. OASIS asks those who are working in other female dominant sectors, such as early childhood education and home care, to please reach out to us so that we can work together to find a solution that benefits all Ontarians.
2. Employees Matter: More than 80% of the developmental services workforce is made up of women. Attraction and retention in our sector, and many others, is problematic due to non-competitive wages, lack of full-time opportunity and advancement positions.
3. Agencies Matter: Frontline developmental services agencies help address systemic pressures and provide the support needed when vulnerable individuals with a developmental disabilities are no longer in school, so that parents can continue to work and contribute to the economic health of the province.
4. Sustainable Services Matter: Pay Equity burdens continue to have unintended consequences on frontline services, especially with regards to employee retention.

## COLLABORATION MATTERS



## **LCDS launches an innovative way of independent living**

The Developmental Services Housing Task Force awarded funding to six creative community-based housing initiatives for adults with developmental disabilities from across Ontario. Lambton County Developmental Services (LCDS) is extremely excited to announce that our proposal was selected and awarded more than \$94,000 over the next two years.

This project focuses on person-directed planning and promotes independence by giving people a home in the community of their choice. It also promotes community inclusion and awareness by providing community supports through partnerships between the participants, their families and partner organizations. The goal of our life planning process is to help facilitate a life map that will promote greater independence and deliver person-centered supports with help from key people in the person's life.

While families will continue to support their family members in the community, there will also be many opportunities for independent living. In order to maintain a sustainable support system, it is important that all family members (siblings, nieces/nephews) remain engaged to avoid relying solely on parents. This model, of engaging all family members, was described by the participating parents as a "hands up", not a "hand out" approach to work in a collaborative manner.

An example of this "hands up" approach is LCDS's partnership with Habitat for Humanity Sarnia/Lambton. Over the past 5 years, this partnership has provided the opportunity to increase affordable housing options for people receiving services in Lambton while building a collaborative model of support between services, family members and community partners. This living model addresses the need for affordable housing for all community members while providing jobs and affordable living options to fellow community members in return for their support; creating a network of support within the community.

Having a sense of "home" is important for everyone. People looking for services do not want to live in a 'group home'; they want a place of their own. With this shift towards increased collaboration with family members and community partners comes the need for residential alternatives. Quality outcomes associated with



residential alternatives include increased choice, greater empowerment, individualized support, greater community presence and an increased sense of value and belonging. Aligning our supports, services and funding to continue promoting this shift is paramount.

The focus on community and person-centered thinking instead of the traditional program focus is evident in this new framework. Creating partnerships within communities and families, instead of acting as lone agents in service provision, encourages inclusion and builds on community capacity, which in turn promotes the sustainability of supports. The commitment and engagement of families is integral in transitioning people into independent living. As a result of this new living model, families will receive long awaited residential supports for their family member as we build capacity by combining all resources and building creative partnerships. Sustainability, collaboration, and innovation are important themes that strengthen our impact.

Submitted by:

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## **MCSS HOUSING INITIATIVE PROJECT - Why Wait - York Region Lifetime Independent Facilitation**

Tullio Orlando, Montage Support Services Executive Director, and Brian Woodman, Director of Services at Montage, have been successful in applying for funding under the MCSS Housing Initiative Project. They worked with Developmental Services Consultant Kelly Casey of KC Professional Solutions who's past experience includes Manager at Developmental Services York Support Services Network, Vita Community Living Services, York Support Services Network, West Island Association for the Intellectually Handicapped in Montreal, Commission D'Ecole Catholique de Montreal and Centre de readaption de l'ouest de Montreal.

The primary reason for Tullio and Brian's successful applications under this program is their ability to work with lead families in their community. One of the

ways they did this was through Individualized Passport Funding to create a Micro Board that will respond to the requirements of MCSS in several important ways. First, as a Human Resource and Staffing component. Second, an accredited TPA is available, with proper assurances that they are QUALM compliant and properly trained. Lastly, that there is an Administration factor that will respond to appropriate audit of the finances and successful implementation of the plan.

The application is comprised of several parts. It is crafted by the consultant, a lead identified family and a TPA through which to flow the funds to the Micro Board (see [here](#) for more details). The key to success is that it is family and community driven.

For those who attended the May 2016 OASIS Conference and AGM in Niagara Falls, you will recall from the exceptional presentations that this type of approach to meeting the needs of individual families and their children is the way of the future. It is what transformation is meant to lead us to. It is not the end of agencies but rather the transformation of agencies to something infinitely more supportive, creative and person centred than ever before. It is an approach which allows people to choose how they live, where they live and in what they will live in.

All across the Developmental Services Network in Windsor, Essex County, London, York South, Simcoe County, the GTA, Kingston, the Ottawa Valley, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, change is sweeping our sector and we as agencies need to be the harbingers of this good news. Through Passport Funding, the DSO, consultants working in communities, local families and MCSS/MCYS, we are on the cusp of bringing a revolution to the Developmental Service Sector. This is a train that will not stop and you are encouraged to get on board.

It is time for all of us to revisit our business models so that we are ready for these changes and so that we can better support and engage families. Cease your opportunity to help lead the way to a transformed system.

[Click here to see Micro Boards in action](#)

David Barber  
Past President  
OASIS