



OASIS

focus

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The 12th Annual OASIS Conference and 2009 Annual General Meeting is now history. Hosted by Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor, at the infamous Caesars Windsor Hotel, it was a fantastic event with many highlights.

The conference kicked off with an address from the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, who confirmed that the funding promised in an earlier budget, would flow to the sector. Easing very real concerns during tough economic times and providing a sigh of relief in light of the collective agreements agencies signed and other commitments made...this set the tone for a celebratory conference.

Spoiled by such a large facility, each aspect of the conference enjoyed the luxury of space. There was one room for meals and key note speakers, separate rooms for workshops, a room of vast proportions for the largest tradeshow in OASIS history and yet another room, containing over 200 chairs and individual drums, where each participant was led through a drumming exercise that seemed to levitate spirits and generate incredible energy.

Truly, Windsor/Essex County has raised the bar for future OASIS conferences!

Recapping our 2009 conference, it's hard not to reflect on OASIS' humble beginnings as a group of 6 agencies that came together in 1996 to combine their efforts and advocate on behalf of agencies. In just 13 years we have grown to 147 member agencies that recognize our collective power and value the foresight of our founding members who understood the potential to strengthen our sector by working collaboratively. As a group, we have accomplished much, and continue to build upon past success.

As a volunteer organization with no paid employees or fixed office space, all membership fees go to providing services to our members. We continue to conduct the largest wage survey in the sector, this year's results representing agencies which account for more than two thirds of the MCSS transfer payments in the Developmental Services sector. In the coming year, we will once again, in conjunction with Queen's University, sponsor an Executive Program for leaders in our sector. We will meet with the Minister of Finance to ensure that the Developmental services sector is thought of during budget deliberations even in this time of financial restraint. New regulations will be issued by MCSS and with the guidance of our membership OASIS will respond to them as we did with Bill 77.

The membership of OASIS provides a powerful knowledge base which allows us to respond to the Ministry in a meaningful way. We know that our voice is heard because of the relatively unbiased and balanced opinions we provide to MCSS.

We anticipate local issues such as the Building Code and Fire Code will continue to present challenges to member agencies. We recognize that it will require our involvement to ensure that these issues don't get lost among the multitude.

As we head into another year facing the many challenges within this sector, we can take inspiration from OASIS founders whose wisdom laid a strong foundation for us to continue their work. Though challenges may be daunting, our past success provides a promising outlook from which to move forward.



MINISTER MEILLEUR SPEAKS AT OASIS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

UPCOMING OASIS BOARD MEETINGS:

September 16-17, 2009
Ottawa

November 4-5, 2009
Barrie

December 9-10, 2009
Toronto

FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed.

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OASIS

To facilitate the sharing of ideas, resources, systems and information, OASIS will liaise with government on behalf of member organizations with the goal of improving the development of cost effective quality supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

OASIS was pleased to welcome Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, to the opening banquet of the OASIS Annual General Meeting and Conference. Minister Meilleur was warmly applauded as she detailed the work of the government since 2004. She placed particular emphasis on the closure of the remaining institutions and spoke of how the efforts of OASIS in partnership with government "...have made unprecedented progress in the last six years."

The Minister also discussed elements of the new legislation, The Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, and pointed out that the regulations specific to the Act would soon be available for public comment (note, the first regulations are now posted on the MCSS website for viewing).

Included in her remarks were comments on the current economic state of the province, she noted that in spite of the economy the Ministry would be honouring its commitment to wage and base funding for the upcoming year. In addition, the government would be contributing 185 million dollars to affordable housing for low income seniors and persons with disabilities.

In addressing the Community Capacity Initiative the Minister called agencies "...

the backbone of Ontario's developmental services system" and expressed her gratitude to agencies for assisting the government in achieving the targets under the Initiative.

The Minister concluded her speech with a heartfelt thank you and encouraged the sector and government to work together to "... build a future where all people with a developmental disability are truly included in Ontario communities.



Xavier Noordermeer-Executive Director-CL Windsor, and Nancy Wallace-Gero-Executive Director-CL-Essex County (far right), present Bruce Crozier MPP-Essex with a token of appreciation for his ongoing support of the developmental sector at OASIS 2009.

2009 OASIS CONFERENCE TRADESHOW



OASIS Trade Show "Pit Crew" organizers - Left to Right: Steve Shearer-CL Windsor, Terry Cloutier-CL-Windsor, Tony DeSantis-CL-Windsor, Tarek Kaskas- Maxim Medical Supplies-Windsor.

2009 OASIS Conference hosted the largest tradeshow in conference history! With nearly 40 exhibitors showcasing their products and services it was a great opportunity for participants to meet the people behind these businesses. As we know in the Developmental services sector, a strong relationship between the customer and the service provider enhances the

quality of service. Through conversation the customer can articulate their needs and the service provider can cater their product to suit those needs. The tradeshow is the perfect incubator for that conversation. However, too often tradeshows garner low attendance, a few awkward smiles and at best a pamphlet exchange without maximizing event potential. That was until this year! Both participants and exhibitors were impressed with the calibre of this years' show. I asked organizer Tony DeSantis, Manager of Community Relations and Resource Development for Community Living Essex County, to share his tips on a successful tradeshow:

Tony, your team did a fantastic job at this year's show, was this simply a stroke of luck or a goal from the onset of conference planning?

There was definitely a conscious effort to raise the bar and increase the size and scope of the trade show.

What was your inspiration, or motivation?

We had a larger venue which motivated us, it was something positive to offer trade

show exhibitors. Knowing one room would be dedicated to the show, we agreed early on to put a concerted effort into highlighting the trade show.

How did your committee strategize to recruit more vendors and how did you entice them to participate?

The strategy was simple: start early, identify a cross section of potential vendors and make certain that it was a win-win situation. We wanted to create an attractive opportunity for vendors to promote their products and services. Customer service was also important to us, so committee members selected particular vendors and were in constant contact with them by e-mail and telephone. We promised a great venue with lots of exposure and an exciting atmosphere at Caesars Windsor Hotel and Casino.

Working with so many vendors/ contacts can be a significant workload, what practical tips would you suggest to keep it organized, efficient and a positive experience for all participants?

The theme is very important. Our theme, Rev it Up, was an automotive theme and we tied all of our promotional materials around this. Marketing materials (ie, flyers, e-mails, website accessibility to conference information) helped to ensure potential vendors received sufficient information about the tradeshow. (It helped that the workload was spread out amongst a team with each member responsible for certain functions and reporting back to the Chair on a regular basis.) This kept everyone up to speed and unified in our vision for the tradeshow. On a practical level, I used a binder system with sections for potential contacts, correspondence, confirmed sponsors, exhibitors etc. This kept me very organized.

What did you learn from this experience?

I learned a lot! We received very positive feedback from those who participated, both exhibitors and guests. The most valuable lesson was: if you create an experience that meets or exceeds expectations...you will never be disappointed. Again, it's about creating the win-win situation. We knew that exhibitors were looking for exposure and the ability to talk to their customers, and guests would be looking for a tradeshow that was convenient, worthwhile and different. We knew that our location offered the perfect facility both logistically and in terms of accessibility for participants. Being creative with our theme and innovative in our marketing (ie: the game card that was to be signed by each exhibitor for an attractive prize incentive) we could deliver an exciting tradeshow experience that was

valuable to all. In the end though, it's all about teamwork. Both Community Living Essex and Community Living Windsor collaborated in a way that produced results. We worked separately on our individual tasks but were motivated by the same goal: to roll out the red carpet and welcome people to our community. We wanted them to have fun and remember the 2009 OASIS Conference. I like to think we accomplished this...and in the end, we really did Rev it Up!



Tony and his team should be congratulated on their hard work and dedication. It apparently paid off, exhibitors felt their investment was well worth their while and raved about the success of this year's show. Speaking with many of the exhibitors throughout the conference, they expressed a sincere desire to work with OASIS members to improve our sector and support agency efforts. This year's tradeshow attracted a cross-section of exhibitors representing products and services for direct care support, team building, learning and development, insurance products, fundraising, administrative support and much more! The 2009 OASIS tradeshow was successful because it laid a foundation for the kind of conversation that enriches the relationship between agencies and the people and businesses that support our work. This year's exhibitors are eager to continue this conversation to enhance our sector and the work we do through their support!

Below, meet just a few of the 2009 OASIS Tradeshow Exhibitors:

Kudos to the "Rev it up in Windsor Essex County" OASIS Conference 2009 team for hosting the finest conference **BSC** has ever attended. A special thank you to all in attendance who came by our booth to talk about our flagship, person centered, outcome based software, AIMS. We look forward to working with you again in the near future as we assist you in answering whether your personal and organizational outcomes are being met!

Brent Buchwald, President and CEO

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Altus Dynamics delivers integrated enterprise technology and solutions to Nonprofit, Government and Education organizations in North America. Our Altus Dynamics Supported Living suite is powered by Microsoft Dynamics NAV and is specifically engineered to provide a complete and integrated enterprise business application for service-based organizations including Community Living groups. We were pleased to have the chance to share information about our solution with visitors at our exhibition table while attending sessions on the newest developments in the world of assisted living at OASIS this year. To learn more about Altus and our solutions please visit:
www.altusdynamics.com

The **Bala Learning Centre** in partnership with Community Living South Muskoka has developed a suite of computer software that enhances communication for those who cannot use words. We offer assistive technology, individualized curriculum, educational software and personalized technical support. Our product is delivered in the language of your choice, giving a voice to the unheard. For further information contact:

Bala Learning Center
705.762.0028
www.balalearningcentre.vianet.ca

Best Buddies would like to thank our current host site partners who have helped us facilitate our program. We are always looking to work with new agencies to expand our program. If you are interested in more information please contact us at our main office:
Best Buddies
1.888.779.0061

CARF is a private, non-profit, independent accrediting body that sets benchmark international standards. Through a process of self-assessment and impartial peer review of conformance to a balanced set of standards, organizations are guided to improve their business practices, services to clients at the

front-line, and outcomes. The “moral owners” of CARF are the persons served, and CARF has a long history of accrediting those working in the human services field. There are accreditation programs for Behavioural Health, Medical Rehabilitation, Aging Services, Child and Youth Services, and Employment and Community Services. The latter is of particular interest to the developmental services sector.

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ComVida Corporation is pleased to be attending the annual OASIS Conference and AGM for the fourth consecutive year. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet again our ever growing family of customers – new as well as current. Zahir Shariff and myself, David Langley, want to thank the OASIS team from Community Living Windsor and Essex for preparing an excellent venue for the exhibitors. As the pre-eminent employee and financial management software vendor serving Community Living and Developmental Services organizations, ComVida also looks forward to conducting regional presentation and demonstration sessions in locales throughout Ontario in the coming months.

David Langley, ComVida Corporation
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Essential Autism provides consultation and presentations for organizations that support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through our training sessions we help teams develop individualized strategies to increase independence and improve quality of life. Effective professional development can help reduce staff attrition and increase team cohesion. We also have the first in a series of children’s book available to help children understand and accept autism.

Dwayne and Debbie Wessel, Essential Autism
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Hammond Insurance had a great time participating in the 2009 OASIS Tradeshow and enjoyed meeting with the representatives from across the province. Congratulations to everyone at Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor for putting together such a remarkable event. For a comprehensive review of your Group Benefit or Pension plans, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Safe Management Group (SMG) would like to thank the Organizers for providing such a great venue and successful conference. This OASIS Trade Show provided me with a great opportunity to meet with agencies and trainers currently involved with SMG. For new agencies or agencies wanting to increase the number of trainers, call us to receive our OASIS Promotion, which includes FREE Training. Call us to find out more about our Ministry approved training program.

Inge Secor, Manager of Operations Safe Management Group Inc.
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ShareVision is web-based software designed to help agencies manage information critical to providing services to their clients. At the heart of ShareVision is a database

system that allows agencies to collect information at the client level, and use the accumulated information to create reports. ShareVision creates summary pages for each Client, Program and Residence – from this page staff can access any forms or documents that pertain to the person, place or program.

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A great convention at a great venue. **Stevenson and Hunt** is proud and pleased to support special needs agencies at the OASIS conference. The conference is a great opportunity to meet friends, clients and future clients. See you all next year in Collingwood.

Brenda Taylor-Anderson Stevenson and Hunt Insurance
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Working Environments has been providing ergonomic solutions for over 10 years to people with special needs, work related injuries, and other special physical requirements, so that they may return to work in a healthy and productive fashion. We specialize in ergonomic seating and height adjustable furniture that are custom fitted to each individual. In addition, our newest division, Ergonow.com, is an online resource dedicated to educating people on how to improve their own workplace ergonomics as well as to provide a one-stop-shop for all of their ergonomic accessories.

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If the contact information for you or your agency has changed, please contact Mary Van Delft with the new information: mvandelft@lcds.on.ca 519-882-0933