

# Focus Newsletter Spring 1997

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## OASIS Agency Membership On The Rise

In three short months, Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) has gone from six to twelve member agencies supporting over 2,000 people with disabilities. Further inquiries about membership are coming in weekly.

New member agencies are: Aliston, Midland, Elmira, North Wentworth, North Bay and Sarnia. They join the founding agencies of Brantford, Lambton, Norfolk, Ottawa and Woodstock.

Together these agencies represent in excess of 70 million dollars of MCSS transfer payment funding. According to OASIS President, Annie Oliver, OASIS will seek representation at the table with government in discussions regarding any issues affecting the future of the Developmental Services Sector.

Annie Oliver expressed delight at the surge of interest. She indicated that a major OASIS priority was to create a strong bond among the member agencies with a proactive communications strategy; and a willingness to build a mutual support network based on what agencies want and need from their provincial body.

OASIS was founded in November of 1996. In a few short months the organization has built a solid infrastructure through the auspices of a very active transitional Board of Directors. Members of the 12 member OASIS Board have over 100 years of combined professional and volunteer experience working on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.

On an interim basis, OASIS has no paid staff and functions entirely on the basis of the efforts of its member volunteers and professional staff from participating agencies. Some consideration will be given to engaging a paid coordinator in the coming months.

OASIS is a provincially registered non-profit corporation with a charter and mandate to develop a mutual support network for agencies providing services for people with developmental disabilities.

The OASIS headquarters is temporarily based in Simcoe, Ontario. The organization has a web site at: <http://www.oasionline.ca/> and can be contacted by phone (519-426-5000, ext. 225) or e-mail ([oasis@oasionline.ca](mailto:oasis@oasionline.ca)).

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## OASIS President, Annie Oliver

Annie is well-known to the community living movement in Southern Ontario.

She has been a long time supporter and is past President of the Norfolk Association for Community Living. She started on the NACL Board in 1990 and was President from 1993 to 1996. On November 22, 1996, Annie was elected President of Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs. She has proven to be a tireless advocate and lobbyist in her efforts to advance the experiences of community living for people with developmental disabilities.

Annie is also an educator. Since 1988 she has been the Coordinator of the Developmental Service Worker Program at the James N. Allan campus of Fenshawe College. She is the mother of two sons, Michael and Tim. Her husband, Jim, is the Manager of a local Conservation Authority.

Annie is an avid outdoors participant in skiing, camping, canoeing and golf.

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## OASIS Workplan

Commencing with the 1997 calendar year, the Board of OASIS has developed an operational workplan which will be continually updated as tasks are identified and completed. The "workplan" will serve as a dynamically evolving plan of action for the OASIS Board. As such, it will provide a detailed changing picture of both the objectives and accomplishments of OASIS. Copies of the updated workplan will be made available to all member agencies on a monthly basis.

New member agencies are encouraged to submit action ideas and other comments regarding the workplan to any member of the OASIS Board or if you prefer to OASIS President, Annie Oliver, at (519) 426-5000, ext. 225 or e-mail at [oasis@oasionline.ca](mailto:oasis@oasionline.ca).

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### Related Topics :

Archives  
 Mission Statement  
 By-Laws  
 Correspondence  
 Focus Newsletter  
 Special Documents  
 MPP Bulletin  
 OASIS Workplan

Choose a link above for more info.

### Site Highlights

Careers / Agency Job Postings  
 Policy Database  
 The Annie Oliver Award  
 Site Map  
 Contact Us  
 Atlas of Resources in Intellectual Disabilities  
 Click above to view a highlight.

## Technology Corner

### Virtual Web and E-mail Addresses

OASIS has established a registered domain name (dhagencies) and a virtual server. The combination of these initiatives does two important things for OASIS and all member agencies:

- 1) The registered domain guarantees permanency of addresses for the OASIS web site and e-mail address.
- 2) The virtual server guarantees permanency of address for web sites and e-mail for all OASIS member agencies who choose to use the service.

Essentially, the virtual address such as <http://www.oasisonline.ca/> simply points to the real address wherever it is in the world. The advantage is that if your service provider (ISP) goes out of business or you choose to use a different service provider (ISP) because of poor service, you can keep the same virtual address regardless of where you do business.

The virtual addresses (web and e-mail) become your official publicly advertised addresses (business cards, letterhead, etc.) which do not need to change.

OASIS has the registered rights to the domain name "dhagencies". The Board of Directors has indicated that OASIS would allow member agencies to use the virtual addresses even if a member agency does not renew its membership.

This opportunity is free with membership. It is a highly recommended way to proceed if you have not already publicized web and e-mail addresses widely.

Inquiries about virtual address implementation can be made by contacting OASIS Webmaster, at [oasis@oasisonline.ca](mailto:oasis@oasisonline.ca).

### OASIS Internet Site

In recent weeks the OASIS internet site has been updated to include links to new member agencies along with appropriate contact information where available.

Readers should be aware that well over two hundred links have been added for community living agencies across Canada and there are dozens of new links to research resources in Canada and around the world.

The OASIS web site is intended to be a repository of information for OASIS activities, contacts, policies, communications, and so on. This site will be updated frequently and should be bookmarked as a starting point and virtual one-stop shopping centre for information related to supporting people with developmental disabilities.

The OASIS site can be seen at <http://www.oasisonline.ca/>

### Listing a Web Address on Internet Search Engines

The following two web addresses will walk agency staff through this process. Your agency address will be listed on dozens of web search engines at no cost provided you follow directions closely:

- 1) Submit-It: <http://www.submit-it.com>
- 2) The World Wide Web Broadcaster: <http://www.broadcaster.co.uk/>

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### Employment Standards Violations

The following are avenues for addressing alleged Employment Standards Act violations for employees covered by a collective agreement.

#### Pre-Bill 49 Law

Under the former law, there were no restrictions upon the right of employees who were covered by a collective agreement to bring a complaint under the ESA.

#### The New Law - After Bill 49

- Employees covered by a collective agreement are not entitled to file or maintain a complaint under the ESA, unless the Director of Employment Standards considers it appropriate in the circumstances.
- The new law requires employees covered by a collective agreement to grieve alleged ESA violations using procedures outlined in the relevant collective agreement. Employees in the bargaining unit are bound by the union's decision on whether to pursue an alleged ESA violation to arbitration.
- An arbitrator hearing a grievance involving an alleged ESA violation now has the same powers as an Employment Standards Officer to order payment of money owing to an employee or to employees by an employer. Additionally, the arbitrator has the authority to make an order that an Employment Standards Referee could make where the grievance alleges that subsection 33(2) of the ESA has been contravened (discrimination in benefit plans), or that an act, agreement, arrangement or scheme is intended to defeat or defeats the true intent and purpose of the ESA either directly or indirectly. As such, an arbitrator will be entitled to order persons to cease and desist from the act, agreement, arrangement or scheme, and may order persons to take actions, or refrain from taking actions, in order to comply with the ESA. An arbitrator will also be entitled to order an employer to pay interest on any wages owing to an employee where it appears just and equitable to do so.

- An arbitrator's order can, however, be for an amount greater than the \$10,000.00 maximum claim provided for in Bill 49, or for an amount less than any future prescribed minimum.
- An arbitrator's order, or refusal to make an order, regarding ESA entitlements is not reviewable by the Employment Standards Branch.

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### Member Agency Highlights

#### Brantford and District Association for Community Living

The Brantford Association is close to fulfilling a #1 goal from their Strategic Plan which was "by 1996, every person entering or receiving our services/supports will have a Person Centred Plan." Last year a pilot project was run with 25 individuals and proved very successful. The process learned through this pilot has been used to develop a model of the Person Centred Planning Process.

#### Norfolk Association for Community Living

#### Multi Service Employment Centre

The Multi Service Employment Centre is extending its partnerships in the community in many interesting and innovative ways. With the financial backing of the federal government, the MSEC, in conjunction with seven other community partner agencies, is realizing an expansion of the original one-stop job training and employment centre. As this report is being prepared, the look of the MSEC is changing and the prospects for the future look strong and healthy in this area.

#### Grant From The Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

Haldimand-Norfolk Women's Services and the Norfolk Association for Community Living are pleased to announce the receipt of a special one time grant from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation in the amount of \$12,000. The funds are to be directed toward an educational project aimed at improving the community response to women with a disability who are experiencing abuse. "A disability is any limitation on the amount or type of activity a woman can undertake." It may be a mobility, visual, hearing, psychiatric, developmental, learning, or environmental (eg. allergy) disability or a combination of these. It may also be a non-visible disability such as chronic fatigue or a chronic illness such as AIDS.

The short term outcome objectives for the project will be:

- Increased access to information re: women's rights to be free from abuse.
- Increased number of women who have knowledge of their rights.
- Increased community awareness and understanding of issues re: violence against women with a disability.
- Increased resources and information for women with a disability and for the broader community.

The long term goal is to increase safety for women with a disability. The outputs will be a brochure for women with a disability regarding their rights to be free of abuse, newspaper articles, a one day workshop for providers and women with disabilities and a comprehensive resource "library", all to be completed by the end of December 1997.

#### Community Living Huronia

Community Living Huronia recently held its sixth annual gala concert fundraiser which generated rave reviews among participants and the general community. This has been a very successful public relations and fundraising project. This year's feature performer was pianist Antonin Kubalek who delighted the audience with piano renditions of selections from Cesar Franck, Ignac Paderewski, Claude Debussy, Franz Liszt and Fredric Chopin.

#### Collingwood Community Living

Collingwood Community Living staff, Board, clients and supporting families participated in various volunteer capacities in the 1997 Special Olympic World Winter Games. The mission of the Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children (eight years of age and older) and adults with a mental disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in sharing gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. The Sixth Special Olympics World Winter Games was the largest international multi-sport event in the world in 1997 with over 2,000 athletes and 700 coaches from over 80 countries. In addition, there are approximately 6,000 volunteers assisting with the games.

#### Lambton County Association for the Mentally Handicapped

The nomination process has been completed for the Lambton County Developmental Services Adult Restructuring Committee. This committee will replace the Lambton County Planning Group, which was in operation for several years. The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) has required that communities establish Restructuring Committees to address future delivery of services for developmental services in Lambton County and throughout Ontario.

#### Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

In the course of restoring the Centre Block of Parliament, the Ministry of Public Works and Government Services had to dispose of some 7,000 kilograms of 75 year-old copper that was removed to make way for the shiny new roof. Fortunately for OCAPDD, someone at Public Works had the inspiration to offer a portion of the green, weathered copper to ARC Industries, at well below market price. A lapel pin has gone into full-scale production using this copper, after test marketing

showed it to be a winner and sales are brisk. Bearing the legend, "This item has been crafted in part from the original copper roofs of Canada's Parliament Buildings, completed in 1919. The copper has been fashioned in a heritage momento as a reminder of Canada's proud history. This fine product has been constructed through the participation of persons with develop

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### "Service Models" Ideas and Discussion

Most professionals in the business of providing supports to people with disabilities realize that no single support solution works for all individuals and that "support models" over the years have been both in and out of favour.

A stated principle of OASIS is to respect a range of support options in the field while facilitating the sharing of information about these many options. Precisely because local circumstances do vary so widely, local agencies need to devise how they can best support people. This column is an attempt to shed light on what others in the field are doing.

One so called "support model" in the employment category is the "affirmative business" approach. Affirmative Businesses were out of favour for several years, but are once again being looked upon as viable ways to develop employment for people.

In the past, attempts made to set up successful businesses often failed because of the lack of experience non-profit agencies had in this area. Current approaches are utilizing subtle and not so subtle twists on an old theme.

An article written by Tom Little from the Centre for Management of Community Services does a good job of providing a set of guidelines to consider when creating new work alternatives along the lines of an "affirmative business". These guidelines attempt to give individual clients more ownership and responsibility while limiting the role of the agency to supporter, not business operator.

Tom Little readily acknowledges that it is too early to conclude whether this "affirmative business" approach will be broadly successful. Certainly in some areas "affirmative businesses" will not be entirely integrated. Nonetheless, for those interested Mr. Little's recommended guidelines are as follows:

Principles For Creating New Work Alternatives For People With Disabilities  
(Taken from an article written by Tom Little in the Autumn 96 edition of Community Professional)

- People with disabilities should play a significant role in the running of the businesses. They should be owners, managers, and/or part of the decision-making process.
- Ventures should be entrepreneurial and business-like in the way they operate.
- The businesses should be structured in the same way as other commercial entities - i.e. they should be private corporations with shareholders; unincorporated sole proprietorships or partnerships; or incorporated co-operatives.
- People with disabilities should have income security. They should earn minimum wage or better whenever possible. When this does not occur, they should be compensated in such a way that does not put them in violation of the Employment Standards Act or of Family Benefits eligibility requirements.
- The work force should be integrated, and the jobs should allow people with disabilities to be exposed to the broader community.
- Agencies should play a support role, helping only to the extent necessary. In general this should be limited to providing staff for on-the-job support of individual workers. However, consideration may be given to assisting in areas such as finance (start up, working capital), legal (acting as legal entity for contracts such as lease agreements), product or service development (including handing over existing contracts along with plant and equipment), and staff (providing administrative, supervisory, management, and sales assistance).
- The work should enhance the image of the people who are engaged in it.

Of these principles, the ones which make this approach different from earlier attempts revolve around putting the individual first, giving him/her as much ownership and responsibility as possible, and limiting the role of the agency to supporter, not operator or provider, of the business venture.

Is this feasible? The jury is still out. In an environment in which many people with disabilities want to work, but can't find an opportunity to do so, service organizations are being forced to look hard and long at how they can make employment a reality.

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### The Roeher Institute Featured Web Site

Web Site: <http://indie.ca/roehler/>

This perspective critically examines issues related to the well being and fundamental human rights of persons with an intellectual impairment and other disabilities. Based on its examination of these issues, The Institute raises awareness about the barriers that affect people's well being and prevent them from exercising their full rights. The Institute also presents policy and program alternatives.

The Roeher Institute's uniquely Canadian perspective has attracted interest from around the world. That interest has resulted in international linkages, through which the ideas and approaches developed at The Institute have influenced the community living and disability rights perspective in many countries around the globe.

To fulfill its mandate, The Roeher Institute is engaged in many activities:

- Research and public policy analysis
- Publishing
- Information dissemination

- Social development and training
- (La version française sera disponible bientôt)

The Roeher Institute's Publications Catalogue contains a complete description of The Roeher Institute's publications and ordering information.

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#### **Featured Best Practice: Affirmative Business**

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.

##### **Affirmative Business**

This issue of Focus features two affirmative business practices. These experiments provide a wealth of insight about how certain strategies of integration of work activities for clients with handicaps fare in the real world. Interested OASIS member agencies are encouraged to contact the submitting agencies for further information.

##### **1) Business Support Services**

On August 21, 1995 a new enterprise called Business Support Services opened at 12 Argyle Street in Simcoe. Business Support Services is a store which offers a wide range of business related services that include faxing, photocopying, laminating, bookbinding, packaging & assembly and wedding & party novelties.

Business Support Services is a component of the Career Support Service, Business Ventures, and is affiliated with the Norfolk Association for Community Living. Business Ventures is a career option for individuals with developmental disabilities who have expressed interest in working in a self-employed capacity. In addition to the storefront operation, Business Ventures also includes a Cafe and Catering service, a Carwash service and a Janitorial service which operate out of 644 Ireland Rd., Simcoe.

The individuals operating the 12 Argyle Street storefront had similarly for several years offered their business related services at the Association's Main Offices on Ireland Road. In the fall and winter of 1994 the idea to move the services to a storefront within the downtown core was discussed and followed up with research to determine the idea's merits. In January 1995, the participants concluded from their findings that the idea to move was the right way to proceed. Potential benefits included improved accessibility for their existing customer base, new business opportunities and community participation.

NACL, as an organization, supported their decision to open a storefront and assisted the involved individuals in locating and securing the property and making the necessary renovations.

NACL is fortunate to have the support of the United Way, the Municipal, Regional, Provincial and Federal levels of government backing them in their efforts to promote and support the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

The official Grand Opening of Business Support Services turned an idea into a reality. A continuing effort to provide quality and innovative services to their customers will be the necessary ingredients to sustain and nurture its growth.

##### **2) Business Hatchery**

The Brantford and District Association for Community Living has made a conscious effort to attract fledgling businesses to rent space in our Sheltered Workshop and possibly to purchase, on a service basis, administrative and/or labour support.

This is a new concept, but already, we have three businesses renting office or floor space from us, an importer (and we do his assembly work), a company that reinks printer cartridges (potential for the involvement of two to three individuals), and a magnetic sign company.

The funds from the space rentals assist with ongoing operating expenses and the purchase of administrative support helps to offset secretarial expenses.

#### **WCB Rate Increases**

Following the current dramatic rate increases by the WCB, Rosemary George, Executive Director of Woodstock and District Developmental Services, an OASIS agency, was instrumental in conducting a survey of 101 Ontario ACL's regarding the impact of the rate increases. The results were shocking. Increases to a single agency were as high as \$57,000 per annum. It was particularly disconcerting that increases to agencies were all over the board with 1997 rates ranging from 0.44 cents to \$3.28.

These increases, which are not covered by increased MCSS subsidies to agencies, will directly affect service quality because agencies will once again in many cases need to reduce staffing to cover the costs. The total cost to the 66 agencies which responded to the survey was almost one million dollars.

OASIS President, Annie Oliver, swiftly responded to the survey results with a letter to the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer and the Honourable Janet Ecker indicating the concerns of OASIS member agencies as follows:

**Dear Ms. Witmer and Ms. Ecker:**

This letter is being written on behalf of OASIS, Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs. The mandate of OASIS is to provide support to agencies, who in turn, support people with disabilities.

The purpose of this letter is to draw to your attention our concern with the additional expense being imposed on charitable non-profit organizations as a result of the Workers' Compensation Board rate increase.

One of our OASIS member agencies conducted the attached study of this increase against 61 agencies supporting people with developmental disabilities. The results indicate an increase of \$928,528.92 per year for the 61 agencies effective January 1, 1997. For some agencies, the increase is over 400%.

As there are over 350 transfer payment agencies supporting people with disabilities in this province, the total amount of this increase, is in all likelihood, over 5 million dollars! This presents deep concern for OASIS. A similar increase will again be realized in 1998, as agencies are moved over to the full Target Rate level.

It is very difficult for us to comprehend the governments intentions. While one branch of the government instructs agencies to reduce administrative expenses, another branch of the same government, at minimum, doubles an administrative expense for the agencies. Many of our member agencies will have little option but to reduce service dollars to address this increased administrative expense. This situation must be addressed as it affects all services for people with disabilities. We need a provincial solution.

Your thoughts and suggestions toward a provincial solution are welcomed. I look forward to your reply.

Annie Oliver  
President, OASIS

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