

Focus Newsletter Fall 1999

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Staff Retention - A Growing Pressure

The issue of hiring and retaining staff among many ACLs and other organizations providing supports to people with developmental handicaps, has reached a critical phase.

The prevalence of this problem has become common place throughout Ontario in the past two or so years due in part, to the following factors:

- 1) comparatively low paid jobs. Health & Education opportunities are hiring qualified applicants away from this sector;
- 2) almost eight years of fiscal restraint has exacerbated this issue; and
- 3) much lower unemployment rates generally.

Many Associations are faced with critical staff shortages on an ongoing basis. Staff working large amounts of overtime is becoming the norm in several organizations. Morale issues are prevalent where staff recruitment is difficult. Reports are coming in from all parts of the province.

The [OASIS Board](#) has recently set aside some funds to do a survey to more precisely define the problem. [Cathy Wood](#), [Ottawa-Carleton Life Skills Inc.](#), and Karen Anderson, Total Communication Environment, Nepean, are taking the lead to develop the survey. More information will be forthcoming on this very important issue, in due course.

Crisis in Confidence Campaign - by Sue Dolan, OASIS President

Following through on the Crisis in Confidence Campaign introduced at the OASIS AGM on May 7, 1999 in Ingersoll and the OASIS/OACL news conference held in Toronto on May 20, 1999, the final stage of the Campaign is in your agency's hands. On October 7th at TCP Studios in Toronto, OASIS President, Sue Dolan, parents Ruth Nagy and Susan Beayni and OACL President, David Barber, met to tape their thoughts and concerns regarding our Crisis in Confidence. The result is a powerful 17 minute video production entitled "Are We Asking Too Much? - A Crisis in Confidence."

A copy of the tape has been sent to each MPP and to the Premier. The tapes are also in member agency offices. Don't let them gather dust!

Accompanying each tape is a list of suggested uses and OASIS does want feedback on results. We need to know how the tapes are used, what the responses were, etc. Let us know through the [listserv](#), FOCUS or e-mail me at kdolan@oxford.net and I'll share the stories and comments. Additional copies are available through [Rosemary George](#) at Woodstock & District Developmental Services by e-mail or at (519) 539-7447, for a minimal fee.

Growth in Size Means Growth in Work

OASIS membership is now at 65 agencies. The business of the Association has multiplied dramatically and the workload is being carried on by member agency staff and volunteers all over the province. This operational model has been wonderful from the standpoint of involving many agencies to a much greater extent than otherwise might be the case. On the other hand, as the organization expands, there is increasing pressure for dedicated staffing. The OASIS Board is currently looking at the issue of "purchase of service" as a way of meeting some of its operational requirements.

From inception, the OASIS Board has committed not to raise member fees to unreasonable levels. This fact, combined with the added participation which the current "work sharing" model brings, forces the Board to look at less conventional ways of fulfilling the task driven agenda.

Member agencies who would be interested in helping with some of the many activities of the Association, would be welcome to leave their name with OASIS Secretary, [Judy Vellinga by e-mail](#) or at (519) 669-3205.

Member Agency Highlights

CHOICES

CHOICES announced that it has recently created the position of Community Development Co-

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ordinator. This position will be responsible for volunteer recruitment and development, public relations and fundraising. This is one step in the implementation of the agency's strategic directions.

Windsor Community Living Support Services

The families of those working at Venture Resources were asked to participate in a recent survey as to what type of support service would be most appropriate for their son/daughter/sibling. 50% selected Venture Resources as their first choice.

Brantford and District Association for Community Living

The Annual Report of this agency reports on the first year of having a Rights Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to review restrictions that have been imposed by the agency, by individuals they support.

The Committee met monthly and reviewed 39 restrictions. Nine restrictions were lifted on or before the one-year review date. The Rights Committee has added a much needed dimension to the Outcome Review Process that this Association has accepted as an operating philosophy.

Toronto Association for Community Living

The "Time is Now" Information and Networking Day, which was held November 20, 1999, addressed issues and offered information on topics that families have identified as essential to consider when they are planning for the future.

OASIS Welcomes the following new members:

- New Leaf Living & Learning Together Inc.
- West Nipissing Association for Community Living
- Y's Owl MacLure Co-operative Centre Inc.

Does your agency have a unique story for the Agency Highlights? [Please let us know.](#)

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