OASIS focus

A Publication of Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs • Fall 2010

President's Message

OASIS would like to congratulate the Honourable Toby Barrett and endorse his private member's bill, Bill 23, an Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 and the Taxation Act, 2007. This Act will lower the reduction so that a person can retain a maximum of $700 of other income monthly. This change would mean that individuals could have an additional $350 per month available to them to cover living expenses and enhance their quality of life. This Bill also amends the asset level to $12,000 individually in determining whether a person is eligible for income support. This Bill passed second reading in the Legislature in the last session and is now at the Standing Committee process. OASIS member agencies are encouraged to contact their local Members of Provincial Parliament to support this Bill and put pressure on the Government to move this Bill through the approval process.

This will be a challenging year for OASIS member agencies faced with increasing costs and the broken promise of MCSS not providing the 4th year commitment of 2% base funding increase. Agencies may be faced with difficult choices like downsizing services, laying off staff to meet collective agreement obligations and whether to meet their Pay Equity obligations and face potential deficits. Agencies are also dealing with the compensation restraint being imposed by the Government on non-unionized employees. The OASIS Board of Directors continues to bring these issues forward on members' behalf to the Ministry and to their Members of Provincial Parliament.

The Transformation of the sector is moving forward this year. Following an Expression of Interest Process, Vita Community Living Services & Mens Sana Families for Mental Health have been selected to provide the training with respect to the Ontario Regulation 299/10 Quality Assurance Measures. Transfer payment agencies will be expected to participate in training related to Quality Assurance Measures made under the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008. OASIS anticipates the further roll-out of the Human Resource Strategies Core Competencies this year after the successful completion of the pilot project.

OASIS is reviewing the Strategic Plan and setting new goals. Planning has already commenced to develop our communication plan and position papers for the year and for the election in 2011. On November 4th, the Board approved our Governance Policies and they are available on the OASIS website.

In early August, 2010, a Broader Public Sector Consultation process began with the unions and employer groups. This process, which was intended by the government to establish a 'Framework Agreement' in relation to the Restraint Act and 2 year compensation freeze, concluded in mid September.

The Provincial Network hosted a two-day forum on October 13 and 14. Day one was hosted and coordinated by CUPE and OPSEU. Our entire sector was invited to participate in a full-day information sharing session on Alternative Models of Bargaining. Many agencies represented by CUPE and OPSEU had signed Letters of Understanding during their last round of negotiations that committed them to attending such a session. The day provided us with the opportunity to hear directly from Labour Unions with respect to some of the potential benefits of central bargaining in the Developmental Services sector. To this point, no mandate has been sought or achieved with any employer groups to pursue central bargaining. There is, however, agreement to allow the exploratory discussions to continue. OASIS is engaged in these discussions, which will be facilitated in part by the Ministry of Labour.

The second day of the Provincial Network Forum included an opportunity for agencies to debrief and have discussion with the Broader Public Consultation process Developmental Sector Representatives: David Ferguson (Ontario-Carlton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities), Gerry D'Amico (Community Living Toronto), Michelle Palmer (Community Living London) and Wade Durling (Bethesda). A sincere thank-you is extended to the four individuals for their commitment, expertise and participation to the BPS Consultation process.

Judy Reid
OASIS President

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Upcoming OASIS Board Meetings

December 8th - 9th, 2010
Oshawa
Participation House
(Durham Region)

February 9th - 10th, 2011
Thornhill
Reena

April 6th - 7th, 2011
Ottawa

May 10th & 13th, 2011
Toronto

FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed.
Please contact
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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.

Profile of an Oasis Board Member

Donna Britten has been a member of Community Living Toronto for 38 years. It began when her son David, who has a developmental disability, turned 4 and was preparing to enter the school system. As a former teacher, access to good quality education for her son was of the utmost importance. This was when she decided it would be important to her son's future that she connect with an agency to understand what supports would be in place for him when they were needed. She also wanted to meet other parents who had similar concerns. Donna's involvement with the Association began at that time at the local level, mostly around challenges that were facing her son – bussing, school, accessible recreation etc. In time, Donna was asked to sit as a member of the Board of Directors and has since spent almost 20 years on the Community Living Toronto Board. Currently, she is on their Regional Council, Government Relations, Resource Development and Policy Committees.

Donna was President of Community Living Toronto when OASIS was formed and she remembers attending the first OASIS Annual General Meeting and Conference in 1998. Though the role of OASIS and Community Living Ontario has been contentious at times, she recognized the different roles both groups played in the sector and felt it was important that the Association participate in both groups. Donna sat on the Board of Community Living Ontario as the Association's representative.

Donna feels strongly that families and agencies working together can create the best supports for people. Her son, David, who requires 24 hour care because of his complex needs, lived at home with his father and mother and two sisters until he was 18. At that time a space opened in a high support group home just 10 minutes away from their family home in Scarborough. Donna has always felt that each of her children, as adults, should have the right to live separately from their parents. It was most natural for David to move out of his family's home, as his sisters have, to create his own life in the community. Donna knew that this would not have been possible without the caring and well-trained Community Living Toronto staff that support him.

According to Donna, "He has many more people in his life now. He has wonderful staff, who really appreciate the great guy that he is and he is visible and connected with people in our community. Our family will always be there for him, to love him and to be strong advocates for him but now we have good staff, several who have been part of his life for 18 years, to give him the 24 hour support that he needs. We can now just be his family. Most importantly, David is happy."

Her strong belief in family and agency collaboration has been evident in her leadership contributions. Twice throughout her involvement at Community Living Toronto she has had a leadership role in review of its Mission, Vision, and Values Statements, co-chairing the teams that lead the projects in 1998 and again in 2008. Donna ensured that stakeholders at every level were given opportunities to have input and to be heard through the process. Donna said that, "It was a great privilege to be a part of creating something that would have a huge impact for my son and his future and for the future of the 6,000 people that Community Living Toronto supports. It was an opportunity to connect staff and families, steering them towards one common goal. It was very empowering." Her value for family and agency collaboration seems to be reflected in all projects that she's involved with.

While President of Community Living Toronto, there was an emerging belief that a partnership among service provider agencies, funders and consumers would be valuable to the DS sector in Toronto

With her involvement, a collaborative model, Developmental Services Toronto (DSTO), was developed and represents the three stakeholders: funders (MCSS), service providers (agencies) and consumers (adults with developmental disabilities and their families). Donna played an integral role in this collaboration and, for several years, was the chair of the DS Council which represents the consumer voice of the model. Her leadership in this project has given her opportunities to bring the family perspective to agency leaders and Ministry forums. Her participation at The Partnership Table gave her opportunities to discuss issues related to implementation of the transformation of developmental services in Ontario.

This is Donna's second year on the OASIS Board of Directors. For her, the most important work they can do is to continue to advocate for strong, sustainable, accountable agencies that will provide quality supports and services to people with a developmental disability. She feels confident that OASIS can fulfill this role because they have a very powerful voice at the provincial table.

Donna reflects on her history in the DS Sector as a wonderful journey. "I have met the most outstanding people who are committed to making a difference and I met them because of my son and the opportunities that have come through him."

Donna shared some thoughts that she has developed for herself and shared with others, "I am only one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. And I won't refuse to do the something that I can do to make a difference for people with a developmental disability" and from Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever does".

Awareness and Marketing Committee Update

The Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy (DSHRS) is committed to promoting careers in the Developmental Services (DS) sector as a career of choice in Ontario. The Awareness and Marketing Committee, a subcommittee of the DSHRS, was created with a mandate to recommend a plan for a marketing campaign to increase the pool of DS professionals and to position the DS sector as a valued and professional career choice. The committee represents a broad spectrum of DS professionals with extensive experience in marketing and public relations.

The committee will deliver a strategy for a DS marketing campaign to promote career paths and DS opportunities, make recommendations for a common language in the DS sector and recommend a process for recruitment beyond Ontario's borders that recognizes professionals trained outside of Canada.

Over the last two years this committee has gathered knowledge, understanding and feedback from a variety of stakeholders and reviewed best practices and lessons learned by other jurisdictions outside of the province of Ontario. From this research, a communication plan and recommendations for marketing campaign tools were developed.

In 2010, a marketing firm was hired through a competitive process that reviewed over 25 proposals. PGe, a large professional marketing firm with prior experience in our sector, was awarded the contract and are currently working to develop a DSHRS website and related marketing tools (i.e. ads, flyers, brochures) to be used for the marketing campaign. The website will showcase information about working in Ontario's DS sector and will provide all agencies with access to professional and creative marketing tools that can be customized to specific agencies while maintaining a consistent brand.

Research was conducted to test taglines with people who receive support and ads were tested with people who are not connected to the DS sector. The theme upon which the brand is being developed is that DS professionals hold a career with meaning, opportunity and the ability to make a difference in people's lives everyday. The campaign will target a diverse demographic to include three specific target markets: secondary and post secondary students, people looking for a second career and new Canadians. Actual DS employees will be used as models in campaign materials. The campaign tagline is What did your job do for you today? and materials will reflect a series of 'answers' that respond to the tagline and reinforce the brand concepts. Above is a sample of one of the posters that will be available on the website for agencies to customize with their contact information and promote the DS profession within their community.

In 2011 the goals of the committee are to develop a common language for the DS sector, produce YouTube video's and engage people through facebook and other social media tools. A final report and committee recommendations for an ongoing marketing campaign will be submitted to the DSHRS steering committee.

For DS agencies, this provincial campaign is a powerful collaboration that will align all agencies around a new professional profile, offer leading edge marketing and social media opportunities, lower advertising and printing costs and promote a career in the DS sector as a career of choice. The Awareness and Marketing Committee is requesting that agencies share their input and feedback as new elements are rolled out, send agency information to be uploaded onto the website, use the new materials in your marketing and recruitment efforts and share YouTube videos and facebook links at every opportunity. All elements of the campaign are scheduled to be rolled out in January of 2011. For more information or to request a form to submit your agency information to be uploaded, contact Holly Duff at hollyduff@sympatico.ca or 519-576-3106.

2010 OASIS Conference Trade Show

OASIS would like to thank all of the businesses that supported our 2010 OASIS Conference Trade Show. Following are some of the businesses that participated:

"Toughchair has been designing structurally durable tables and chairs in solid wood specifically for the Developmental Services Sector since 2000! We are proud to be serving you and supporting OASIS."

Kevin H. J. Smith
President
Toughchair
(Canadian made solid wood furniture)
T: 705.735.0684
Kevin@toughchair.ca
www.Toughchair.ca

"ShareVision was pleased to be part of OASIS 2010. ShareVision is person-centric software for outcomes management; it reduces complexity and increases the amount of staff time available for client care."

Laurie Miller
T: 866.971.4325 ext 4
laurie@sharevision.ca
www.sharevision.ca

"TriOS College prepares students for careers in the Healthcare industry. We can offer you student interns at NO COST and job-ready graduates every month."

Joanne Bradley
T: 866. 918.7658 ext. 1035

"We have provided pharmacy services, incontinence care and health care supplies to group homes throughout Ontario with reliable and accurate medication delivery, 24/7 pharmacist support, compliance packaging, education and an incontinence enhanced care program."

Josh Cole
Classic Care Pharmacy and ClassMed
joshcole@classiccare.ca
T: 800.677.4053 ext 291

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Catherine Davidson
Business Development Executive
CARF Canada
T: 613.726.7922 (toll free) 877.434.5444
www.carf.org

"Friendship Ministries provides a mentoring model for nurturing spirituality and encouraging people who have intellectual disabilities to become active members of their faith community. Training, consulting, and curriculum are available."

Nella Uitvlugt
Executive Director
Friendship Ministries
T: 888.866.8966
friendship@friendship.org

"ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES!! Creative Carriage has partnered with MEDIchair's 26 Ontario store locations to provide local service and sales support to OASIS members. Protect your capital investment, reduce your logistics and costs with regular servicing!"

John Tom
MEDIchair Barrie
T: 705.722.3376
barrie@medichair.ca

"SmartMeds Pharmacy is proud to be the supplier of choice to many Community Living Associations in Southern Ontario. We offer pharmacy support for the next generation of risk management and quality care."

Stefani Daws
SmartMeds Pharmacy
T: 905.320.8189
Stefani@smartmeds.ca

"Advanced Tracker Technologies provides Time & Attendance/Employee Scheduling systems to private and public sector organizations, including health care groups. We also provide a wide range of data collection units."

Gerson Safran
Advanced Tracker Technologies Inc.
gersons@advancedtracker.com
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Charity Village is dedicated to encouraging Canada's 200,000 charities and nonprofit organizations. Every day, you'll find more than 3,500 pages of news, jobs, resources, volunteer and event listings, educational opportunities, and much more. http://www.charityvillage.com

"If your financial reporting requirements are evolving but your accounting software isn't, consider Adagio. Adagio is a complete line of accounting modules with the best financial reporting capabilities available."

Bruce Gardner
Arx Business Solutions Inc.
T:416-535-4884
bruce@arxbusiness.com

Best Buddies Canada is dedicated to enhancing our communities through friendships between students and people with intellectual disabilities. We believe that friendship is a medium through which people can become a part of their communities

Emily Arsenault
Program Coordinator
Best Buddies Canada
T: 416.531.0003, (toll free) 888.779.0061
Emilya@bestbuddies.ca

"The Bank of Montreal enjoyed participating in the OASIS Conference. We will continue to support organizations of special needs groups"

Allan Johnson
Allan.johnson@bmo.com

Hosted by Community Living Toronto in partnership with:

Community Living Oshawa/Clarington, Mary Centre, New Leaf: Living and Learning Together Inc., New Visions Toronto, Reena, Surrey Place Centre, Vita Community Living Services of Toronto Inc.

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