



# OASIS

## focus

A PUBLICATION OF ONTARIO AGENCIES SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS · SPRING 2011

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Developmental Services Sector is at an important, indeed critical, juncture as the elements of *Transformation* begin to be implemented. The Government of Ontario must permit supports and services to reach a broader range of people, encourage and allow new initiatives to be launched and ensure the long term financial and support stability of the sector.

In November, the Ministry of Community and Social Services revealed the proposed funding allocation model for Intervenor Services. The *Transformation* of Intervenor Services has paralleled the *Transformation* of the Developmental Services Sector and several OASIS members receive funding from both sectors. OASIS and its member agencies who receive Intervenor funding identified significant concerns with the proposed funding model. The Ministry has held meetings to try to address these issues. OASIS recognizes the challenges that the Ministry faces due to the limited funding available and the impact of the lawsuit requiring more individuals to be served. David Carter-Whitney, Assistant Deputy Minister-Policy and Carol Latimer, Director Community and Developmental Services Branch attended the OASIS Board meeting on February 9th to provide an update on their work on the proposed funding model and *Transformation*. The Ministry is faced with the need to develop a model to prioritize funding that is based on fairness, within available resources, and the support

needs of those individuals served. The Ministry continues to work with its partners to explore options. There is a need to look at measurements, assumptions, cost drivers and establishing some type of funding range while still providing flexibility for the agency. Work must continue on determining how to transition to a new model, if existing individuals will or could be grandfathered and what the equity implications are in a new funding model. It is understood that no funding model will be able to address every issue. The Ministry and Transfer Payment Agencies are advocating for more funding for this vital service in the 2011-2012 budget.

OASIS is actively working with the Government to ensure that the voice of the Transfer Payment Agencies is heard. In December 2010, John Bedell attended a meeting with the Ministry of Finance and on January 28, 2011, Bonnie Dinning and David Ferguson made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on behalf of OASIS. OASIS made the following recommendations for inclusion in the Committee's Final Report:

- Make an investment of, at minimum, an additional 2% on current base budgets in Transfer Payment Agencies for 2011-2012 to enable agencies to meet their unfunded Pay Equity obligations for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.
- Invest \$60 million to begin to reduce the ever-increasing waiting lists both from young people leaving school and older people with aging parents.
- Support the passage of Bill 23 to amend the ODSP Act.
- Allow for the creation of reserves to provide greater flexibility in planning and the use of resources.

The MPP Bulletin will also be sent to members of Parliament this month and will focus on the issues of system capacity,

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## UPCOMING OASIS BOARD MEETINGS

April 6 & 7, 2011  
Ottawa

May 10 & 13, 2011  
Toronto

FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed.  
Please contact  
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## OASIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

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long wait lists, the impact of the unfunded pay equity on the sector, ODSP and the inconsistencies within and across Ministries regarding the ability for transfer payment agencies to establish reserves.

The Provincial Network hosted a second forum on Alternative Bargaining on January 27, 2011. The day provided us with further information on bargaining models and their pros and cons, as well as an update from the Developmental Services Provincial Discussion Table. The Direct Discussion group outlined the following principles that will guide further discussions:

- Consideration of the best interest of the people supported in the Sector
- The best interest of the entire Sector,

both union and non-union, will be of equal consideration and weight

- MCSS must remain at the table as a party to the discussions and any agreements must be binding on current and future governments
- Any agreement must be flexible and recognize that the Sector cannot be mandated into a model of bargaining; local autonomy and authority of each organization must be recognized.

The one non-negotiable on behalf of the employers is that there will be no picketing of people's homes. A sincere thank you goes to David Ferguson, Michelle Palmer, Marion Peck, Bruce Rivers and Brian Young for their commitment and participation in this process.

Judy Reid, OASIS President



## OASIS VOLUNTEER, JANE JORIS

In this issue, we are profiling OASIS Vice President Volunteer, Jane Joris, who resides in Lambton County and is currently the Resident Manager for North Lambton Lodge, a non-profit, municipally run long term care home.

Jane has been involved in developmental services her entire life. As a child, she remembers her uncle, a man who had cerebral palsy and a developmental disability as a very important part of her family. He lived with her grandparents his entire life and the whole family contributed to his supports. She also had a cousin who had Down Syndrome who lived a short life at Huronia Regional Centre, a nephew who lives with his family and a niece, who lives independently in the community and was one of the first people in the province to receive individualized funding. Although services have improved over the years, she feels there is still much room for improvement.

Jane began volunteering at a young age before entering the developmental sector as an employee of Lambton County Developmental Services. After ten years in direct service, she left LCDS to work in Long-Term Care. She served on the Adult Developmental Restructuring Committee for Lambton County before joining the LCDS

Board of Directors. At LCDS she served as chair of the Rights Review Forum, a third party review of interventions that might infringe on the rights of people receiving support. During her tenure as Chair of the LCDS Board, in partnership with the County of Lambton, LCDS was able to develop eight new social housing apartments for people with developmental disabilities. Accessible, affordable and well maintained housing, as well as Rights education and development for people with disabilities, are two aspects of services that Jane has worked diligently to improve.

In 2005, Jane was elected to the OASIS Board of Directors. As an OASIS Board member and LCDS Board Chair during the introduction of *Transformation*, Jane acknowledges that these have been challenging times for the sector. She feels strongly that OASIS needs to remain vigilant that wait lists are addressed and to ensure that strides made for fair wages in the sector are not lost.

Jane truly believes that innovation must be emphasized in future services and supports saying, "I feel that Government has a responsibility to provide services, however, I also believe that families, communities and agencies need to work together to find opportunities for social enterprise and natural supports as well as partnerships with social housing funders and providers, industry and communities are imperative to ensure that people are truly members of their communities"

# INNOVATIONS – COMMUNITY LIVING SOUTH MUSKOKA



Community Living South Muskoka believes that the Government of Ontario will never have enough resources to meet the needs of the developmentally disabled. If we want to provide additional services and supports we must find other ways to financially sustain ourselves and become valued contributing members of our community. With this goal in mind Community Living South Muskoka purchased a 35 acre farm on the outskirts of Bracebridge in 2007. We wanted to create employment opportunities for the individuals we serve, become an outdoor recreational space for our community to enjoy and see individuals with a developmental disability as capable, friendly, teachers, partners and community leaders.

The cost of this project is not funded by the Ministry. We host an annual golf tournament as well as other fundraising events that assist us with the capital costs of the farm. We built a new barn on the property that we use for community events, dances, staff training and our annual general meeting.



We reached out to local farmers in our community to teach us about farming and assist us with the preparing of the fields for planting each spring. We planted corn and pumpkins and sold them to two local merchants and individuals operated a stand outside our head office.

Each year our crops are expanded, and we have developed community gardens that the group homes used to grow their own vegetables this past summer. The community gardens will be expanded this spring and members of the community will be able to rent plots.

This year we hosted our first annual Fall Harvest Days over two weekends in October. The individuals we support created and manned a haunted barn and boo barn for younger children. In addition, we had campfires, food booths, games, and wagon rides. We even had the cooperation of the deer that were willing to feed on the fields while children passed by on the wagon rides. This event encouraged several hundred people who had never had any dealing with Community

Living South Muskoka to come out in the teeming rain to participate. It built a positive relationship with our community, and increased our volunteer base and the number people wanting to come out and use the farm. It also eliminated some of the community's perceptions of individuals with a developmental disability.

We have also donated a small portion of our land to the Town of Bracebridge to put an accessible path and parking area from our road to our community's new baseball diamonds and community park.



We have created a new venture called Snowdrifts that teaches winter survival skills and snowshoeing to local school children. The individuals we employ show the children how to build quinzees, start a campfire without matches, and enjoy the trails on the farm. Each school gets a video of their time at the farm and has become known as the best outdoor experience that the local school board attends and that it should be made mandatory with the school system. We have groomed and made cross country and snowshoeing trails available to the general public. In March, we will be hosting events for the community over the March break and holding demonstrations of our winter survival course.

Buzz Cutz and Fanatical Finishes, our lawn maintenance and car detailing businesses, are also headquartered at the farm. The individuals employed in these businesses will be making minimum wage this year and a portion of the support staff salaries are funded by the businesses.

Our newest adventure occurred this month with the installation of a solar array on the farm. The power generated will be sold back to the grid. We have a twenty year contract with the Ontario Power Authority and the funds for the power generated will pay for the equipment as well as provide us, in the long term, with annual operating funds for the farm.

**Celebrate  
& Innovate**  
PREPARING FOR TOMORROW



# 14th ANNUAL OASIS CONFERENCE

MAY 11-13, 2011

Delta Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

[www.event-wizard.com/events/oasis2011/](http://www.event-wizard.com/events/oasis2011/)

This year's OASIS conference has been planned to provide you with a rich mix of speakers and presenters, touching on a broad range of topics. With our current and future environment in mind, the hosting organizations have been working together to bring you keynotes and a workshop program that will stimulate the spirit and the mind.

The agenda is jam packed with options under the conference theme of "Celebrate and Innovate: Preparing for Tomorrow". In addition to the latest in creative approaches to service delivery and administration, you will also find a series of workshops devoted to governance.

This is a time to share ideas, learn from one another and reconnect with our colleagues.

**<<< Register early online** as space is limited and reserve your hotel directly through the link to the Delta Chelsea to secure the special OASIS conference rate for your room. Come early for a fun round of golf at an excellent urban course. Enjoy a day at the Elmwood Spa. Or take advantage of being in the heart of downtown Toronto with an endless array of sporting, cultural and shopping destinations.

OASIS and its sponsoring agencies look forward to welcoming you to Toronto. Enjoy!





# EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

## AFFORDABLE BENEFITS WITH YOU IN MIND.

OASSIS is an association plan and has been providing Employee Benefit Plans across Canada since 1990 with an exceptional history of stable rates and excellent customer services for our members.

OASSIS helps you attract and retain qualified employees, creating a secure work environment.

We offer benefits to not-for-profit organizations of all sizes and to full time, part time, and contract employees.

OASSIS is a not-for-profit organization and serves the not-for-profit community exclusively.

We set our rates to cover claims and administrative costs only. At the end of the year, any surplus that we have goes right back into the plan. We are not a broker and do not charge commissions, resulting in greater savings for you.

Our Industry Specialists are: Green Shield for health & dental, Sun Life Financial for life insurance, short and long term disability, Shepell fgi for EAP.

Our Associations and Partners are: OCSA, In Kind Canada, OACAO, Volunteer Alberta, and Capacity Builders.

## TESTIMONIAL

Meals on Wheels (Sudbury) have been affiliated with OASSIS since 1993. It has proven to be a cost effective Employee Benefit provided by the Board of Directors and embraced by employees as a definite perk to the work place.

As a mid-size agency with a staff of 11 and a fluctuating volunteer base of over 200, it can be a challenge to administer benefits in a timely and effective way. The staff of OASSIS has been invaluable in providing support and guidance ensuring the process is seamless and consistent. Further, products provided through OASSIS have proven to be competitive and unique to our sector. Throughout our time with OASSIS, the plan has been reviewed and revised regularly to ensure quality of product and cost effectiveness. This has allowed the Board of Directors of Meals on Wheels (Sudbury) to continue to offer this as a Benefit to their employees at no cost to the employee.

As an accountable agency, we regularly review Benefit options and continue to utilize OASSIS as the provider of choice.

**Russel DeCou**

Executive Director, Meals on Wheels

## Please contact OASSIS at:

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