

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

July 2017

Life at BPACL sure operates at lightening speed. I keep saying to myself that the pace and excitement will settle and I am coming to the realization that despite the small(ish) size of our agency, we always have lots of exciting things happening. With change comes opportunity. This continues to be my mantra. Despite some of the temporary inconveniences that may result from unexpected change, we continue to find ourselves in a better place and we continue to move forward. So at the end of a particularly busy week, I can say, yup that was a lot of work, but it was so worth it. The past few weeks have been particularly busy but they have been very exciting.

On Tuesday July 11, 2017 we were so pleased to host a visit from the Minister of Community and Social Services, Dr Helena Jaczek. We were provided with an opportunity to thank the Minister for the \$178,000 Ontario Government Employment and Modernization Grant for our "From Connectivity to Inclusion Project," provide a brief summary of the project and a few details of what we have accomplished in three short months. We also had the opportunity to introduce the Minister to a few of the fantastic people that we support.

After a visit at 550 Berford we traveled to 294 Berford where the Minister toured Endaayaag our six unit Supported Housing Building. The building was built in partnership with Bruce County Housing and we had a representative from Bruce County Housing to greet the Minister. Diane Chavarie, a self advocate and member of the Board of Directors was very welcoming to the Minister and her representatives providing them with an amazing tour of her apartment. We were honoured and grateful to have the opportunity to meet the Minister. We were very thankful she visited on a rare sunny day so she was able to see the Peninsula in all its beauty.



Minister Dr Helena Jaczek chatting to participants in a pre-employment workshop. Megan Mallard, Tiffany Wilson, Jason Tout and Thomas Fenwick were providing feedback on the workshop which will be a peer to peer model for young people transitioning from high school to employment.

Christi Ronholm, Community Development Coordinator, Laura Balint, Program Manager, and Michele Bell, Executive Director engage in the discussion with Minister Dr Jaczek and the participants.



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OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Community Participation

From Connectivity to Inclusion Project:

We are three months into the two year project and so far we have recruited the Community Activations Coordinator who will be working for the next two years to develop a fulsome calendar of events and activities that will enhance the lives of the people that we support and expand opportunities for meaningful activities and greater opportunities for individuals to be included in their community. We have also recruited the Community Development Coordinator who has already made connections with the BIA, several of the churches, and has had a few conversations with Town staff.

We are excited to continue on this journey over the next 20 months and excited about the opportunity to transform the lives of the individuals that we support and hopefully have a positive impact on community life in Wiarton. We are a small agency with big dreams. We will keep you updated as we move forward with the project.

Location Update:

In my April ED update I shared information about the sale of the building that housed our Community Participation Program. We have transitioned our program for the summer to utilize space at Galloway, the Basement at Berford Street and 550 Berford. We are in the process of exploring more permanent options for space and we are hopeful that we will have a more permanent plan by the fall. Thanks to everyone for your patience while we transition to a better space from which to coordinate and offer recreational and leisure activities.

Residential Programs

Staffing Changes:

It is with great sadness that I announce the resignation of Nancy Green, Residential Program Manager. Nancy is currently managing some personal health issues in addition to supporting an elderly parent whose support needs have increased in recent weeks. It is important for Nancy to focus her full attention on her health and to support her aging mother and she feels that she can not provide the necessary support to the residential portfolio.



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Despite the fact that Nancy's time with BPACL has been relatively short, she has had a positive impact on the progress that we have achieved this past year. She took on the challenge of the residential portfolio and assisted all three programs to adjust to the new schedules and supports.

We wish Nancy good health and our thoughts will be with her while she tends to her own health needs and those of her mother. Nancy's last day will be Thursday July 20th. Please join me in wishing Nancy well.

We have put a temporary plan into place to allow us time to recruit for a permanent manager.

Deb Smith and Sher Brown will together provide management support to Mary Two, Gould St and Berford. We are all familiar with Deb Smith who is our Supervisor Quality Assurance and Special Projects.

Sher Brown will be working with us on a part time contract basis until the end of September. Many of you may be familiar with Sher as she worked in a Management Position with BPACL some time ago. She has since worked with Kincardine Association for Community Living and has most recently been working with Helen Sanderson and Associates as a consultant. Sher is pretty excited about returning for this short period of time and reconnecting with everyone. We are grateful to Deb Smith and Sher Brown for stepping in and working with the residential teams as we continue to move forward.

Interesting Articles in the Media

Here are a few articles that may be of interest as well as a link to the media page of Community Living.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2017/07/09/author-of-teen-autism-memoir-grows-up-but-cant-escape-heartbreakautistic-author-explains-what-can-break-his-heart.html>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/07/08/ontario-to-change-child-support-law-to-give-adult-children-with-disabilities-access-to-parental-cash.html>

<http://communitylivingontario.ca/media/>

Enjoy the rest of summer.

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