

## Executive Director Report

May 2009

In reflecting on the year of May 2008 to May 2009, it has been a time of many changes for Community Options. It has been part of our continuous journey to give the best we have to give, to all children.

In July 2008, we launched our new playschool program: PLAY-Positive Learning at Youngstown. It offers opportunities for the social emotional development of children through learning to play approach, and is inspired by Reggio Emilia philosophy. We were grateful for the funding to renovate the facility through the Alberta Children's Services space creation grant, as well as FCSS funding in opening and operation of this program.

Through our FCSS funding we were also able to support Board members and other volunteers through the new position of Director of Resources and Volunteers. Both our FCSS ECD and volunteer programs were able to develop and implement outcome measures, using the HOMES database for reporting, a first step toward implementing a solid method of program evaluation.

In September of 2008, we opened the Lois Bredo Memorial library in our main office, to honor the spirit of Lois. The library offers a warm, comfy gathering place for staff and families and provides children's books for promoting literacy in our Community Preschool Education program. We thank the family and friends of Lois, who gave so generously to make this happen.

Generous donations from Churchill Retirement Community, Cosmopolitan Club, Daughters of the Nile, BMO Foundation and individual donors were received, to support nutrition needs of low income children attending Inglewood School. We truly appreciate this recognition of the needs of young children for healthy food to support healthy development and we are working in partnership with the school to ensure the funding is directed to nutrition needs.

Donations from individual donors supported our application and receipt of a Community Spirit Grant of \$7760 in early 2009.

We owe many heartfelt thanks to our various funders as well. In particular, the City of Edmonton Family and Community Support Services worked closely with us to help focus our endeavors in Board development and recruitment start up of the PLAY program and work on outcome measures. Alberta Education funding is based on the needs of the individual children we serve and we appreciate the

Mankind owes the child the best it has to give...All children without any exception whatsoever shall be entitled to those rights without distinction.

[Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1979](#)

difference this makes to build the foundations of success for the children and families served in this program.

The proud history of Early Childhood Options as a program providing services for inclusion of preschool children and supports to families came to a conclusion in December 08. In its place was launched a new model of Inclusive child Care which provides supports to licensed child care programs in Region 6 serving children ages 0 to 12. Supports included consultation, mentoring and funding to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in child care programs that choose a partnership of inclusion. We were very excited about this program as it provides the opportunity to build capacity for inclusion in the child care community. However, we have just been informed that the Region has decided to deliver the services directly. The Inclusive Child Care contract ends July 31 2009, closing a key chapter in Community Options history.

The Board has worked hard to support the agency through work on a brand new personnel policy and a new Board policy. Their work as volunteers has been invaluable in keeping the agency focused on the vision of strong families for a strong community.

The agency as a whole has developed better standards of accountability and program evaluation, through participation in accreditation, use of HOMES and specific goals and documentation in each program. We are proud of Edmonton Northwest achieving its reaccreditation and look forward to our Out of School becoming accredited through Canadian Accreditation Council.

In March of 2009, the CPE program began a new path under the direction of Cheryl Brewer, who brings a wealth of teaching and administrative background to the position of Director of Programming. We expect to see many more families enrolled in the CPE program and great service for families and children as we go forward into the next school year. Cheryl will also help facilitate the PLAY program.

Our big priority of the year has been to find a new office space for our agency as the lease at Northgate Industries expires in July 2009. Although they offered to have us stay, we can't afford the proposed lease rate on our fixed budget. Therefore, we are searching diligently for a new space and hope to announce something soon 😊

Wherever our journey takes us, it will be on a path that supports the uniqueness of each child, the strength of families and the professional knowledge of all our staff. Thanks to each of our staff who support the journey toward a better world for children and families.

Regards,

Margaret Golberg