

Presidents Report

2008/2009

Last year I had the pleasure of introducing the new leader of our Society, Executive Director, Marg Golberg. Since that time, she along with her competent staff, have persevered through some challenging situations but have always landed on their feet. On behalf of my Board colleagues we would like to commend the efforts of the staff and management who have embraced the changes the organization has seen and have continued providing valuable services with a renewed sense of energy.

A change in direction with our funding through The City of Edmonton brought about a new Play School Program. The **PLAY, Positive Learning at Youngstown** Program was the inspiration of our previous President, Pat Semeniuk and was fostered from the ground up in the past year. The result is a program offering a Reggio Emilia approach to learning which is located within the Northwest area that also benefits from many of our other invaluable services. The Out of School Care and the Community Preschool Education programs welcome new Management this year along with a newly created internal position of Executive Assistant which will in part provide support to our Executive Director. We congratulate all of you on your new positions and we look forward to hearing of the future successes in your programs. The Inclusive Child Care program, formerly known as Early Childhood Options, was implemented to build inclusion capacity through consultation, mentoring, training and funding supports that enable licensed/approved child care programs in Region 6 to include children with special needs. On May 21, we were informed that this contract will end July 31, 2009.

The Board's focus the past year has been revising the Board and Personnel Policies. It has taken a significant amount of time and dedication; however, the result will provide the guidance and direction required for the Society to continue moving forward considering the significant changes it has experienced the last few years. I would like to commend my fellow Board members and the staff for taking on this challenge and for their dedication towards completing this sometimes tedious work. The reward is in knowing that the Society has a solid framework from which to draw on. During our March 2009 retreat we reviewed the Society's Mission Statement and agreed on a change. The new statement for the future is "*Our organization strives to be a leader in the provision of inclusive, quality programs and services. Our priority is the well being of children, families and the community.*"

We also developed 'elevator speeches' which will be instrumental in current Board members recruiting new members and promotion of our Society to others in the community. My thanks to Heather Kennedy-Plant for facilitating this Board retreat. Over the past year the Board held its commitment to 10 regular scheduled meetings along with two Board retreats.

With the recent economic downturn and news of funding Foundations cuts, which provide significant sources of funding for the Society, it is clear that we need to look

towards innovative and creative ways of ensuring the financial well being of our Society. To this end the Board has decided to increase our fund raising efforts by hosting a larger scale Silent Auction this year. It will be held on Friday, November 6th at the Kingsway Legion. We look forward to this event and trust that you will support us in this endeavour.

Volunteerism is a vital part of our organization and we would like to acknowledge those who have selflessly devoted their time. Your devotion has been instrumental in touching the lives of many children and families that we serve. Thank you!! In the future volunteerism will be more important than ever while we face funding cuts and economic uncertainty. I encourage you to continue giving as your efforts make a difference. To my fellow Board members I thank you for your loyalty and hours of volunteerism and I can honestly say that it has been my pleasure to have worked with such a dedicated group of professionals. We are fortunate to have Donors that assist in the delivery of services through their financial commitment. Your support is always appreciated.

Thank you to each and every member of the Community Options team. Your strength, dedication, knowledge and wisdom have not gone unnoticed by the Board nor the children and families you serve. Your hard work is greatly appreciated and I say “keep up the great work and I look forward to what we can accomplish together in the next year!”

Best regards

Maureen Whitesell

President