



## Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB)

# 2008 Annual Report

---

*"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly" (Richard Bach). Bach's quote describes 2008 for us at the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board – the Year of Change.*

*We have seen many changes in our services – some good, some we reserve judgment on – some within our control, some totally out of our control, and although we may accept or even embrace change, it is that place in between that we fear... "it's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer – there's nothing to hold on to" (Marilyn Ferguson). But when all is said and done, it is the best interests of our clients which always come first!*

*Thank you to our remarkable staff for working so diligently and consistently to provide the best services possible to the most vulnerable among us. You are all truly outstanding!*

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

### Land Ambulance

- Ownership of the Emo Ambulance Base transferred to the RRDSSAB.
- The Province introduced new response time standards and rescinded cross border billings, thereby allowing land ambulance delivery agents to negotiate billing procedures with their neighboring Districts.
- Thunder Bay Regional Base Hospital was declared the Base Hospital for the Northwest, after successful lobbying by the Kenora, Thunder Bay and Rainy River ambulance services.
- Rainy River District Emergency Medical Services (RRDEMS) was successful in achieving a three year certification to operate an ambulance service. The provincial inspectors were impressed with the Fort Frances Base, our implementation of Imedic (electronic patient records) and our electronic Human Resources database.
- Working with the Ontario Heart & Stroke Foundation, twenty-two (22) Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) have been placed in municipalities across the District, under contract with the RRDSSAB. An additional sixteen (16) AEDs were received in late December and contracts with our local School Boards will soon be implemented. These AEDs will be placed in schools, particularly those not close to an ambulance base.
- We have switched from paper Ambulance Call Reports to electronic patient reports which have been well received by the Paramedics. Quality assurance is now performed electronically and is expected to improve compliance.
- Our ambulance staff participated in the valuable Ontario Trillium Disaster exercises in Atikokan, Fort Frances and the western District.
- Discussions have begun with Stanjikoming First Nation to develop a heliport.
- We worked with the Township of Emo to relocate its heliport, after it was closed temporarily due to new construction in the area.
- We have moved to new glucometers for diabetic emergencies to standardize equipment across our District.
- We provided coverage to Borderland Racing for their 2008 race season, using on-duty ambulances which were well received by the Racing Committee.
- Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) was completed in all vehicles, in conjunction with the Imedic program. The system provides detailed maps to the Paramedics and live feed to the dispatch on vehicle location.
- Satellite radios were installed in all ambulances by the Province to provide us with back-up communication

in the event of failure of the Fleet Net radio system.

- The cutover to the new Fleet Net Radio System went without incident across the District. The new radio system allows RRDEMS to operate on a single talk group across the entire District – all vehicles can now hear all communications. We also have designated talk groups which permits direct communication with our District hospitals and the Thunder Bay Base Hospital.
- Atikokan was realigned with the Kenora Central Ambulance Communication Centre for dispatch to improve operations.
- A new Human Resource Inventory and payroll system was introduced to assist us in meeting certification standards and improve efficiencies for payroll.
- The Ministry of Health & Long Term Care increased our base funding by \$155,189 in December to bring us closer to a 50/50 cost sharing between municipalities and the Province.

## Child Care/Best Start

### “Opening the Door to New Opportunities”

- The RRDSSAB and Best Start Network continued to move forward with the Best Start Hub initiative in 2008. In the Rainy River District, six of our nine Child Care sites were deemed “Best Start Hubs” or “satellites” and were provided with \$162,900 provincial dollars to begin Hub implementation.
- A new location for Child Care services in Rainy River was purchased and renovations started, anticipating a March 31<sup>st</sup>/09 completion date. The move into the consolidated site will be a great asset to the children and families residing in the west end of our District, as Child Care, Toy Lending Library/Resource Centre and Best Start Hub services will be available under one roof.
- Fee subsidy for families requiring financial assistance for Child Care services saw an increase in usage. A total of 183 children representing 143 families benefited from Child Care Fee Subsidy for various Child Care services, including Nursery School – an increase of 23 children from the previous year.
- Fee Subsidy funding was increased by \$73,500.00 in 2008 through 100% provincial funding.
- The following Table reflects the total number of children receiving *Fee Subsidy* at the end of December 2008, by age group and municipality, as compared to the previous year:

Number of Children Receiving Fee Subsidy 2007/2008 Comparative as at December 31/08				
Number of Children by Age Group				
	2007	2007	2008	2008
Age Group	# of Children	%	# of Children	%
Infant (0-18 mos)	1	1.03%	4	3.17%
Toddler (19-30 mos)	17	17.53%	14	11.11%
Preschool (31 mths – 4 + yrs)	33	34.02%	43	34.13%
JK (3.8 to 5+ yrs)	21	21.65%	24	19.05%
SK (4.8 to 6+ yrs)	8	8.25%	20	15.87%
School Age (5.8 + yrs)	17	17.53%	21	16.67%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Number of Children by Municipality				
	2007	2007	2008	2008
Municipality	# of Children	%	# of Children	%
Town of Fort Frances	54	55.67%	72	57.14%
Town of Rainy River	3	3.09%	5	3.97%

Number of Children by Municipality				
Township of Alberton	1	1.03%	0	0.00%
Township of Atikokan	23	23.71%	38	30.16%
Township of Chapple	1	1.03%	1	0.79%
Township of Dawson	2	2.06%	2	1.59%
Township of Emo	4	4.12%	0	0.00%
Township of Lake of the Woods	1	1.03%	2	1.59%
Township of LaVallee	7	7.22%	4	3.17%
Township of Morley	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Township of Watten	1	1.03%	2	1.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- A very special welcome to Mildred Beck, our new Children’s Services Manager (previously our Assistant Manager of Finance). Mildred has extensive experience which prepares her for the position, having worked hand in hand with the previous Manager over the last several years. Mildred has already put her “brand” on the Program and has brought forward several new ideas which will benefit District families and Child Care Providers!

## Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program

- The CHPP continues to meet the needs of families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Our provincial allocation of \$69,731 was used to support District food banks, the Homelessness Prevention Program and a Supportive Housing Program. At the end of the 2008 third quarter, 49 households experiencing homelessness and 724 households at risk of homelessness had been served.

## National Child Benefit Strategy

- 2008 saw the last year of funding for NCBS, with the Province’s implementation of the new Ontario Child Benefit in July and a decision by the municipalities to terminate their share of NCBS funding as well. Our 2008 budget for NCBS was \$27,300 as compared to \$54,600 in 2007. We continued to target services for children from low-income families for the provision of early intervention, sports & recreation programs, school programs, and lunches.
- As at the end of September, NCBS funding was accessed 235 times for early intervention services compared to 231 times for the same period in ’07.
- Due to the termination of funding, we were no longer able to support school nutrition programs. Fortunately, the School Board was able to access alternate funding this year.

## Ontario Works

### “Creating Opportunities & Independence”

- As of 01 January, 2008, the Province assumed 100% of the costs for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program for our Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients.
- The new Ontario Child Benefit was implemented on 01 July, 2008. Weekly information sessions were held throughout the month of May for affected OW clients – approximately 130 of our cases were affected.
- The Back to School Allowance and Winter Clothing Allowance benefits were removed by the Province and not issued in 2008. Staff ensured that families were provided with advance notice so that they could plan accordingly.

- In October, the Province released its report on the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal & Service Delivery Review which describes a new approach to the funding & delivery of municipal and provincial services in Ontario.
- The Province will begin to upload the municipal share of OW financial assistance and employment assistance costs over a nine year period, beginning with 3% of the municipal share in 2010. By 2018, 100% of these specific OW costs will be absorbed by the Province. The cost of OW Administration (currently cost shared 50/50 with the Province) will continue as is. While the government changes funding arrangements for OW, it does not change service delivery responsibilities, therefore the RRDSSAB will continue to administer the OW Program.
- The report also commits the Province and municipalities to work together to improve the way services are delivered by developing an accountability framework for social services which focuses on results, simplifying and modernizing the delivery of income assistance & employment-related supports, and integrating OW, ODSP and Employment Ontario employment services.
- Social assistance rates increased by 2%, effective 01 December, 2008.
- Total # of OW Intakes from January to November: 388.
- Total # of cases granted eligible to receive OW from January to November: 315.
- The average monthly # of participants for OW was 238.
- 15.13% of the caseload received employment income.
- The percentage of caseload exiting OW to employment was approximately 24.07%.
- The length of time from exit due to earnings to re-entry to social assistance: 13.14 months.
- Percentage of participants who exit due to earning and return: 16.95%.
- Average length of time to employment: 9.63 months.
- The Province reports that even though OW caseloads are decreasing, unit costs are increasing, largely based upon the needs of clients, many of whom are considered "hard to serve". The Province acknowledges that the decline in OW caseloads are partially due to the decline in the population but also as a result of all the good work going on in employment! Krista Ballard, our Employment Support Worker, works closely with our OW staff to ensure that OW clients are properly assessed, and their training and job readiness needs addressed so they can find the shortest route to employment. Hats off to Shelley and all members of the OW Team – Sheila, Tracy, Heidi, Marie, Myrna, Kim, Krista, and Brian for a job well done!

## Social Housing

### "Beyond Bricks & Mortar"

- The RRDSSAB is responsible for the delivery of the RRDSSAB Housing portfolio (299 units).
- Operational Reviews, which monitor the provider's compliance with provincial legislation and local policy, and assists with long-range capital planning, continue to be completed with our various Non-Profit providers. In 2008, Golden Age Manor, Emo was reviewed.
- Our maintenance department has been restructured to ensure that our RRDSSAB-owned and -managed buildings are in excellent condition; housing that staff are proud to deliver and tenants are proud to live in. Under the guidance of Rick Bliss, Maintenance Coordinator, we have made tremendous progress and have received an overwhelming positive response from our tenants. We are truly blessed with an excellent Maintenance Team!
- A Maintenance Survey was distributed to every tenant in RRDSSAB-owned housing to identify maintenance concerns to be addressed.
- We have partnered with the Northwestern Health Unit and Senior's Coalition to provide outreach in several of our senior's manors, including regular blood pressure clinics and regular health and safety presentations geared to seniors.
- RRDSSAB staff provide management & maintenance services for various Non-Profit providers, in addition to RRDSSAB-owned housing. We continue to manage Fort Frances Municipal Non-Profit Housing, Faith Housing and Atikokan Native Urban Housing, and are now responsible for the property management of Columbus Place and, effective May, 2009, Flinders Place. Centralizing administration results in cost efficiencies, uniformity of service and assurance of compliance.

- We have continued our partnership with Northern Independent Living Services (NILS) for support services at Lady Frances Place in Fort Frances for 10 non-senior single apartments. In 2008, we were able to completely modify a unit to make it handicap-accessible for a specific tenant, with 100% provincial funding.
- The Provincial Rent Bank Program Grant of \$19,374 was utilized throughout the year to assist families who had no more than two months of rental arrears and are being threatened with eviction.
- RRDSSAB promoted the second round of Ontario's Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families (ROOF), which provides a financial supplement up to \$100 per month for a five-year period to eligible low-income working families.
- We received \$248,320 in one-time capital repair funding from the Province to respond to urgent capital repair needs, including energy efficiency improvements. The funding is being distributed across the District to the various Housing Providers, based primarily on health and safety needs.
- We provided Affordable Housing Program funding (100% provincial) to thirteen (13) low-income households throughout the District to make urgent repairs, address health and safety problems, or allow modifications for household members with disabilities.
- We have begun regularly scheduled tenant meetings throughout the District, through the leadership of our Tenant Liaison Officers.
- Capital improvements took place at Lady Frances Place, Elizabeth Manor, 6<sup>th</sup> and Webster and various upgrades/renovations throughout the District. We are currently developing our capital plans for 2009.
- We worked closely with the Town of Rainy River and various community partners to prepare and submit an Aging at Home proposal to the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) for funding. The proposal introduced an innovative approach to keep seniors at home and discouraged unnecessary placement in long term care facilities. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure funding and continue to work with the community to seek alternate funding sources.
- Firm Associates Inc was contracted, following a formal procurement process, to conduct a Building Condition Audit/Reserve Fund Study on all of our RRDSSAB-owned properties, primarily to determine the physical condition of the facilities and develop cash flow projections. The final report will be used, as part of our capital planning and budget process.
- Our maintenance department has begun annual unit inspections on our senior and family units, as part of our new preventive maintenance plan.
- A complete review of the Social Housing policies and procedures, including all forms and protocols, took place this year. This was a huge job, involving all affected staff. Thanks to all of you for your input – your commitment and dedication to the Housing Program, particularly our tenants, is obvious!
- We have developed new Fire Safety & Evacuation Plans for most of the RRDSSAB-owned sites and will continue in the early new year to complete them for all sites. Thank you to Wayne Riches at the Fort Frances Fire Department for his valuable assistance.
- The sale of 109-111 Alder Avenue, Atikokan and Fort Frances Native Urban property on Colonization Road West was finalized this year.
- Heidi Parr, our Confederation College Social Work student, took on many exciting projects during her tenure here, including the completion of Senior and Family Activities Questionnaires to assist us with developing "communities" at our housing sites; the development of our new *Tenant Newsletter*; and assistance with the first annual Maintenance Survey. Well done Heidi!
- We are working with the Town of Fort Frances Children's Complex and various children's services providers to provide Outreach Services for children and families in a two-bedroom unit located at 6<sup>th</sup> and Webster. We hope to introduce the new program this spring.
- Our staff participated in several training sessions, many arranged in-house by Sandra Weir, our Non-Profit Housing Manager, including sessions on elder abuse, non-violent intervention training, domestic violence, rent calculations, operational review, governance, etc.
- Our Social Housing Department experienced the most change this year. My sincere appreciation and admiration of our housing staff for their hard work and dedication!
- Our Social Housing Committee Chair, Deb Ewald, summarized 2008 by saying "our Social Housing Department has done a 180 degree turn since this time last year and it is very gratifying to see the progress".



## 2008 Budget Summary

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	
Bd Admin	54,800	54,800	
DSSAB Admin	254,698	104,527	
Ontario Works	7,964,454	7,899,297	
Child Care	1,354,060	1,354,060	
Best Start	807,350	340,149	100% Prov.
Victims Services	0	137,625	100% Prov.
NCBS	27,300	54,600	
Homelessness	64,801	63,036	100% Prov.
Land Ambulance	5,438,979	5,428,092	
Rent Bank Fund	0	18,828	100% Prov.
Social Housing	2,980,947	2,810,467	
Affordable Housing Program	324,900	691,970	100% Prov.
	<hr/>		
	19,272,289	18,957,461	

\*The overall budget increase for 2008 was 1.6%, however **the Municipal share decreased in 2008 by 2.75%**. The Municipal share was less, due to 100% Ministry-funded budget increases, an increase in provincial funding for land ambulance and use of reserve funds.

## Provincial Land Tax Reform

- PLT is being introduced in 2009 and, therefore this past year, the Province prepared for the transition which will “bring the assessment of unincorporated territory properties in line with the rest of Ontario”, according to media releases from the Province. The first new tax bill, reflecting the use of current value assessment, will be sent in the spring of 2009 for the 2009 tax year.

## Accessibility Award

- The RRDSSAB was very proud to receive the *Accessibility Award* at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Rainy River District Business Awards in November. Our DSSAB works diligently to remove social & physical barriers for individuals with disabilities in our office buildings and throughout our social housing portfolio. We offer services to everyone in the District, including seniors and individuals challenged by physical, mental or intellectual disabilities, or addictions. Our employees ensure that the challenges are recognized and that services are provided in a way that meets the needs of all people. We don’t assume that everyone can read or write; that everyone can walk, see, hear, or speak; that everyone sees the world like we do; that everyone can live in the same type of home; that all children can run and climb on the playground; or that everyone lives with the same opportunities. First and foremost, the DSSAB is the provider of services for the most vulnerable in our communities. We were very honored to have our staff and Board recognized for their tremendous efforts.

## Board Training

- In June, members of the Board participated in Board Governance training with Ruth Armstrong, Vision Management Inc. Ruth visited our DSSAB ten years ago, when she was contracted by the Province to provide DSSAB Board training for all DSSABs in Northern Ontario. At the conclusion of the training, Ruth summarized the session by saying that she found our Board “very refreshing” and “very well organized” and spoke highly of our Board policies. She commented that “lots of Boards could learn from this Board”.

*Thank you to all of our staff and Board members for demonstrating a compassion and understanding for those requiring DSSAB services, and for ensuring a very productive and successful 2008. Well done!!*

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Donna Dittaro, CAO

# RRDSSAB Board Member & Staff Listing

## 2008 RRDSSAB Board Members and Area of Representation, as at 31 December, 2008

Linda Armstrong, Dawson

Dennis Brown, Atikokan

John Callan, Rainy River Central

Barb Cournoyer, Alberton

Wade Desserre, Rainy River West

Deb Ewald, Rainy River

Gary Gamsby, Morley

Gary Judson, Emo

Michael Lewis, Rainy River East (Chair)

Valerie Pizey, Lake of the Woods (Vice Chair)

Sharon Tibbs, Fort Frances

Peter Van Heyst, Chapple

Jim Belluz, LaVallee

## RRDSSAB Staff, as at 31 December, 2008

Krista Ballard, Employment Support Worker

Mildred Beck, Children's Services Manager

Rick Bliss, Maintenance Worker

Cheryl Bodnar, Child Care Caseworker/Info  
Systems

Brian Burkart, Atikokan Van Driver

Reg Cameron, Maintenance Custodian

Anna Carlson, Accounting Clerk

Ed Carlson, EMS Supervisor

Donna Dittaro, Chief Administrative Officer

Leanne Eluik, Manager of Finance

Dianne Faragher, RRDSSAB Housing Manager

Sheila Faykes, Income Maintenance Caseworker

Jacques Fiset, Maintenance Custodian, FF

Gary Godin, Eligibility Review Officer/Family  
Support Worker, Housing

Christine Hampton, Finance Clerk

Marie Howells, Income Maintenance Caseworker

Melissa Hughes, Painter

Myrna Jacobs-Beachy, Income Maintenance  
Caseworker

Holly Johnson, Custodian

Trevor Johnson, EMS Supervisor

Michelle Korpi, Tenant Liaison Officer

Judy Koski, Administrative Assistant

Mary Makarenko, Property Manager (ANNPHC)

Tracy McClain, Integrated Intake Worker

Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager

Ron Oswald, Maintenance Custodian, Atikokan

Heidi Parr, Customer Service Representative

Trevis Penney, Maintenance Custodian

Theresa Redford, Maintenance Custodian

Michelle Shute, Tenant Liaison Officer

Shelley Shute, Ontario Works Manager

Fred Sinninghe, Accounting Clerk

Joanne Spence, Personnel & Policy Officer

Kim Tarrant, Family Support Worker/Eligibility  
Review Officer, Ontario Works

Maureen Thomson, Housing Clerk

Shelley VanUden, EMS Clerk

Sandra Weir, Non-Profit Housing Manager

## RRDSSAB Staff, as at 31 December, 2008 - Continued

### Primary Care Paramedics

Donna Adrian, Primary Care Paramedic  
Robert Altbauer, Primary Care Paramedic  
Karen Antonson, Primary Care Paramedic  
Bobbi-Jo Arrigo, Primary Care Paramedic  
Gaydonna Baker, Primary Care Paramedic  
John Beaton, Primary Care Paramedic  
David Black, Primary Care Paramedic  
Brenda Boettcher, Primary Care Paramedic  
Adam Brimble, Primary Care Paramedic  
Arthur Collins, Primary Care Paramedic  
Kim Cousineau, Primary Care Paramedic  
Verne Craven, Primary Care Paramedic  
Andree DeVabre, Primary Care Paramedic  
Gabriele Emond, Primary Care Paramedic  
Martin Emond, Primary Care Paramedic  
Shae Felix, Primary Care Paramedic  
Dennis Gagnon, Primary Care Paramedic  
Therese Gouliquer, Primary Care Paramedic  
Sandi Groulx, Primary Care Paramedic  
Jody Hamilton, Primary Care Paramedic  
Coralyn Hershey, Primary Care Paramedic  
Glenn Ivall, Primary Care Paramedic  
Matthew Jackson, Primary Care Paramedic  
Cheryl Kallaste, Primary Care Paramedic  
John Kellar, Primary Care Paramedic  
Stephanie Kozlowski, Primary Care Paramedic  
Dan Lachapelle, Primary Care Paramedic  
Pat Livicker, Primary Care Paramedic  
Stacy MacIntyre, Primary Care Paramedic  
Lyndia Mann, Primary Care Paramedic  
Lucille McDonald, Primary Care Paramedic  
Kristi McQuay, Primary Care Paramedic  
Cheryl Morrison, Primary Care Paramedic  
Ryan Mosley, Primary Care Paramedic  
Pamela Mucha, Primary Care Paramedic  
Jennifer Olson, Primary Care Paramedic  
James O'Sullivan, Primary Care Paramedic  
Sherri Potter, Primary Care Paramedic  
Nina Sawchuck, Primary Care Paramedic  
Melanie Sheppard, Primary Care Paramedic  
Sheila Skyberg, Primary Care Paramedic  
Bosko Stopa, Primary Care Paramedic  
Stan Vlotaros, Primary Care Paramedic  
Mary Waghorn, Primary Care Paramedic  
Robin Wakefield, Primary Care Paramedic  
Amy Welsh, Primary Care Paramedic  
Christopher Wielinga, Primary Care Paramedic  
Roger Wilson, Primary Care Paramedic  
Karen Wirtz, Primary Care Paramedic