



Ontario Works

Although we have seen a significant drop in our OW caseload this month, it is not the result of employment activity. Unfortunately, we are identifying non-compliance, in that clients have not been forwarding mandatory information which maintains their eligibility for assistance. Shelley Shute, Ontario Works Manager, has been asked to participate in a new research initiative in which the University of Toronto will be exploring welfare reform in Ontario from a 'non-metropolitan perspective'. The researchers want to identify the specific challenges and opportunities experienced by those implementing welfare reform in non-metropolitan contexts. The University has partnered with several parties including the Ministry of Community & Social Services. The findings will be used for academic publication and as input into the public policy-making process in Ontario. Shelley has been recommended by her peers and has a great deal of experience and knowledge to share. We appreciate being able to bring the Rainy River District experience to the table.

Child Care

Children's Services Manager, Kim Gardiman has put together a *Best Start Community Plan 2007-2008*, (presently in draft) based upon extensive input from other community organizations, many who make up the Best Start Network for the Rainy River District. It has taken a great deal of time and hard work to bring the stakeholders together and Kim is to be commended for taking on the task of plan development. It is exciting to read the draft document and see the tremendous effort being made to ensure that our district children receive the best possible start in life and are ready and eager to enter the school system. Much of what was once only a vision has come to fruition due to the work and commitment of many. Phase II will see the move toward integrated Hubs, a more practical and user-friendly system of service for families. This particular concept has been discussed for literally decades so it is wonderful to see us moving that much closer. Hats off to the Network team. Unfortunately, the bids have come in high for the Rainy River Child Care site which was to be integrated in to the elementary school in the Town of Rainy River. The Rainy River District School Board and RRDSSAB have pushed the concern forward to the respective Provincial Ministries for funding consideration. Several organizations, including Municipal representation, will be meeting with Kim Gardiman to revisit the plans for the child care facility. The Province has pushed a 'schools first policy' which has been supported in that community, however it is now up to the Province to be forthcoming in providing the funds to make that policy a reality.

Land Ambulance

We are very pleased that we are progressing on schedule with the bases in Fort Frances and Emo. Management and crew have moved in to the Fort Frances base and we are anticipating a move to the Emo base before month end. Riverside Health Care Facilities Inc has been formally notified and thanked for allowing us the use of their bases over the transition period. We are planning Grand Openings for both bases. Thanks to the Paramedic staff for taking on the huge task of moving us in the new bases.

Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager, reports that our staff have been involved in critical incident debriefing over this past month. Our staff are often exposed to traumatic events which can impact them significantly in many ways. We need to ensure that they are supported during those very difficult times.

Social Housing

Given the split in management of Social Housing, Cathe Hoszowski, RRDSSAB Housing Manager, has been able to concentrate on local matters regarding the RRDSSAB housing portfolio. She has been arranging for more 'hands-on' contact with tenants including tenant meetings, 'walk-about' at the various housing projects and more involvement in project maintenance. We have been fortunate to receive one-time funding for capital repairs which will be used to remedy many areas which we have not had the luxury to address with our current funding.

Sandra Weir, Non-Profit Housing Manager, has addressed the needs of Non-Profit providers and developed a plan for capital repairs, in consultation with Ross Donaldson, Maintenance Supervisor. Sandra recently attended training on Social Housing Management and has brought back the latest information for us.

Cathe, Ross, Gary Godin and Michelle Korpi recently held a tenant meeting (neighbours were invited as well) at 6th Street & Webster to discuss recent concerns and to educate tenants and neighbours on the protocol for reporting concerns. The meeting was considered extremely successful. Regular tenant meetings are critical to the success of social housing - tenants need to feel empowered to provide input and make decisions. We will strive to maintain an open line of communication with them.

Annual Staff Meeting

Our *2007 Annual Staff Meeting* was held on June 7th at Little Beaver Snow Park with most staff attending, including the land ambulance employees. Michael Moore, who Judy Koski and I had an opportunity to hear at a NOMA conference, attended to give us a much enjoyable and relevant talk about humour in the workplace. He based his talk on "HAMMER": a sense of *Humour*, a positive *Attitude*, *Moderation*, *Mutual respect*, *Exercise* and *Relaxation*.

Following recent tragic events and the nature of social services work in general, the presentation was very appropriate. Mr. Moore had us all 'in stitches' as he relayed several funny stories which we could all relate to in the workplace - his impressions of the 'new boss' were hysterical. We also had an opportunity to provide brief program overviews for the new ambulance staff, to determine the charity recipients of our 'dress down day' fund, hear a presentation from our Social Committee, and to present our staff with Long Term Service Awards. The meeting was followed by a delicious burger BBQ prepared by Bob Hamilton and his crew.

The following staff received awards this year:

Five years Donna Adrian
Krista Ballard
Mildred Beck
Ross Donaldson
Cheryl Kallaste
Judy Koski
Dan McCormick
Jennifer Olson
Stan Vlotaros
Fifteen years Brenda Boettcher
Twenty years James O'Sullivan

Human Resources

Since the last board meeting, we have seen the following HR activity:

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	START DATE
Christine Hampton	Finance clerk	contract: mat replacement	28 May/07
Kevin Empey	Custodian	summer student, FF	4 June/07
Jamie Stus	Custodian	summer student, Atik	5 June/07
Adam Brimble	Primary care paramedic	casual, call in	18 June/07
Dennis Gagnon	Primary care paramedic	casual, call in	18 June/07

Respectfully Submitted,

/D. Dittaro