



# OASIS

## focus

A PUBLICATION OF ONTARIO AGENCIES SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS · SPRING 2009

## WELCOME TO 2009



This year promises to be a year of contrasts. Here in Canada our federal government nearly imploded in December and has returned, it seems, with a more cooperative and open attitude toward governing. The issue continues to be the economy and the fate of the current government will likely be determined by the results of their handling of this one issue.

To the south of us the U.S. has a new President, a well loved man who, according to the headline, wants his country to “choose hope over fear”. However, even his inspiring personality cannot buoy up the economy of his

country without an investment of nearly a trillion dollars.

In the Developmental Services Sector we too have to choose hope over fear. We have to continue to work with the Ministry to overcome the level of distrust that has crept into the relationships. We and they have to work in a more cooperative and open manner with full knowledge of the Ministry’s vision of where the sector will be in five and ten years. Of course, we hope for an investment in our sector which we believe will reap instant dividends and rewards for those people on the waiting lists.

We have seen during the Community Capacity Initiative that the sector works together very well. We continue to find that information does not flow from the Regions as openly and consistently as we would like which causes confusion when agencies talk to each other or when agencies operate in several different regions. We continue to identify and work with the Ministry on this issue.

The economy is floundering. This is a fact that everyone recognizes. With infrastructure dollars available it would be appropriate that agencies contact MCSS with any ‘shovel ready’ projects that may have been in the planning stage and are now sitting idle. The Developmental Services Sector regularly keeps trades people working on improving accessibility in our

homes to meet the changing needs of people as well as ongoing repairs and maintenance. Now is a good time to look at creative projects and see if we can access funding.

In March, OASIS is again sponsoring the Queens Executive Program for Developmental Services. This program originally conceived and arranged by our Past President Gerry Sutton continues to receive rave reviews and high recommendation from the participants of the first seminar. Gerry reports that almost a third of the registration for the March seminar was spoken for on the first day.

Registration is now open for the OASIS Annual General Meeting and Conference in Windsor. Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor have arranged to hold this year’s conference at Caesars Hotel and Casino in Windsor. For the past two years we have not been able to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend and waiting lists were required. Not this year. Nancy and Xavier assure us that this venue will allow registration for all who wish to attend. Get ready to ‘REV IT UP’ in Windsor Essex County and I look forward to seeing everyone there.

**Brian Young**  
*President*



# WSIB AGREES TO MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATIONS

The OASIS Labour Relations Committee has had regular meetings with representatives of WSIB for nearly two years. While we have not achieved our goal of a single Developmental Services Sector rate, we are pleased to report that WSIB has agreed that multiple classifications for supported workshops and/or community placements will be eligible for the reclassification of these activities into a single classification, that being RG 861. This rate as of January 2009 will be \$0.98. While a few agencies have already been enjoying this lower rate, many agencies are currently paying rates ranging from \$4.62 to over \$7.00. We certainly appreciate this change that WSIB has agreed to make. We will continue to have discussions with WSIB about a Developmental Services Sector rate that would have one rate for all staff in our sector, regardless of their work location. Having said that, for most agencies with this change, you should now only have two rate groups, 861, (treatment clinics and specialized services) at \$0.98 and 858, (group homes) at \$2.96. We believe that we have made some great progress, but there is still room for improvement. *(continued on pg 3.)*

## UPCOMING OASIS BOARD MEETINGS:

February 25-26, 2009  
Toronto

April 8-9, 2009  
Toronto

May 13-15, 2009  
Windsor

FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed. Please contact **Corey Allison** [callison@lcds.on.ca](mailto:callison@lcds.on.ca)

## OASIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Brian Young, President
- Gerald Sutton, Past President
- Judy Reid, Vice President
- Volunteer
- Ann Kenney, Vice President
- Executive Director
- John Bedell, Treasurer
- Sherry Kerr, Secretary
- Bonnie Dinning, Director at Large
- Denis McClelland
- Brian Dunne
- Molly Croke
- Michael Humes
- Jane Joris

## OASIS

To facilitate the sharing of ideas, resources, systems and information, OASIS will liaise with government on behalf of member organizations with the goal of improving the development of cost effective quality supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**SAVE the DATE**

**REVITUP!**

**in windsor essex county**

**MAY 13\*14\*15 2009**

**Renew. Energize. adVance.**

**12TH ANNUAL OASIS CONFERENCE**  
**CAESARS WINDSOR**  
WINDSOR | ONTARIO | CANADA

**SAVE the DATE**

**REVITUP!**

"REV IT UP!" in Windsor Essex County is the theme for OASIS 2009 and the co-hosts, Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor, are eagerly looking forward to welcoming delegates from across Ontario and southeastern Michigan.

The excitement is growing! The location will be the marvelous Caesars Windsor where service is the key, great food is ensured, and excitement is anticipated. Taking advantage of the celebrity talent in the new 5000 seat concert hall (the largest in southwestern Ontario) will be one of the draws, as will the spectacular riverfront view from the luxurious hotel rooms whose high quality matches Caesar's of Vegas. Of course, the traditional golf tournament has been arranged and plans are underway for partner activities to possibly entice more partners to attend just for the fun.

How about a wine tour in the county or a shopping spree to a prime-store factory outlet.

However, developing a learning conference is the priority and our program committee is finalizing agreements with knowledgeable, interesting presenters. This is a great opportunity for the co-hosts to work together and everyone in Windsor-Essex is enthusiastically bringing the details together and looking forward to the event.

**Come Visit Windsor-Essex in 2009!**

**OASIS**  
(Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs)  
[www.oasisonline.ca](http://www.oasisonline.ca)

Community Living Windsor **519-974-4221**  
Community Living Essex County **519-776-6483**

We know that WSIB coverage and costs continues to be a topic of great interest for many agencies within the Developmental Services Sector. More agencies are considering opting out of WSIB due to the high cost associated with the coverage. It is very important that agencies understand the full implications of opting out. For this reason the OASIS Labour Relations Committee will be hosting an information session on WSIB and Alternative Providers of coverage on April 23, 2009. This session will have an information panel consisting of representatives from WSIB, an insurance company that offers an alternative to WSIB, and Executives from two agencies that have opted out of WSIB. We believe it is important that agencies understand all of the factors and potential liabilities they face before deciding to opt out of WSIB. We expect that this will be a well attended session, as we intend to open the registration to not only Executive Directors and Senior Management Staff, but also to Board members and Union Representatives. More information will be distributed through the various OASIS listserves about this session.

The following is a quote taken directly from the letter we received from WSIB.

*We are pleased to advise you that the proposed changes to CU 8644-000/H-861-06 Life Skills Training Facilities have received formal approval.*

*These classification changes take effect January 1, 2009. Employers that have been assigned multiple classifications for their supported workshops or community placements will be eligible for the re-classification of these activities to RG 861. The following contains some pertinent information that we encourage you to share with your membership.*

**A) Key points:**

*The revised classification unit (CU):*

- *Permits the classification of supported work activities, as described in the CU description, to be included in CU 8644/ RG 861 at a 2009 premium of \$0.98.*
- *Clarifies the compulsory coverage of participants who are engaged in compulsorily covered work activities for which they receive payment, as well as staff performing supporting or ancillary functions (e.g., trainers and administrative staff).*
- *Provides an expanded description of activities for added clarity.*

**B) Viewing the changes:**

*Employers can view the revised CU on the WSIB website from January 5, 2009 at: [www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wecm.nsf/home/ecmhome](http://www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wecm.nsf/home/ecmhome)*

**C) Implementation**

*The WSIB's Employer Service Centre has advised us that an implementation process is being developed and that, upon completion, it will be shared with revenue service delivery teams across the province*

*WSIB Account Specialists will be contacting employers who are eligible for a re-classification of their activities. Affected employers may also contact their Account Specialist if they have questions.*

*The re-classification of these activities to RG 861 will be made effective Jan. 1, 2009. Please advise OASIS members that it may take some time for the WSIB to implement changes to all of the affected accounts.*

We look forward to seeing you at the session in April.

**The OASIS Labour Relations Committee**

## CHRISTIAN HORIZONS PARTNERSHIP WITH FIRST NATIONS

*The old man said that to have been born imperfect was a sign of specialness. The old man explained carefully that in the old days, if a child came with a hareshorn lip, it wasn't a terrible thing or a hurtful thing; it meant the child's soul was still in touch with the Spirit World. (Yvonne Johnson, Journal 9, 1994. p. 423)*

For the past four years staff of Christian Horizons, in partnership with First Nations leadership, has had the



privilege of volunteering on reserves in Ontario's far north with First Nations children and youth who have disabilities.

Our supports are in three areas:

- Six weeks of summer camp designed

for children with disabilities.

- Summer work teams to help repair homes so children have a safe place to live and grow.

- Food, clothing, sports equipment and toys for children at Christmas.

There are no government funds provided for any of these programs. They are raised from our donor base.

Research has found that First Nations children and youth on reserves have almost no access to the broad range of prevention and quality of life services provided by the voluntary sector (FNCFCS, 2003).

Disability is much more prevalent among Aboriginal populations than among Canadians overall. In 1991, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Health and Activity Limitation Survey reported that 31% of aboriginal adults had a disability compared with 13% of the total Canadian population. For 15-24 year olds, the Aboriginal disability rate was more than three times the Canadian average: 22% compared to 7%. (Statistics Canada, 1991) Environmental and socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, social and geographic isolation and inadequate living conditions increase the likelihood of disabilities. (Halliday, 1993,)

There is also a lack of physical resources for recreation and leisure activities including little or no programming for children ages 0-5. There is difficulty in accessing needed assessments for children and even when assessments are obtained, there are little or no resources available to support findings.

Northern First Nation communities face a unique set of circumstances born out of their history, current birthrates (which are high, relative to the rest of the Ontario population), location and other socio-economic factors. Many people don't realize that the majority of First Nations people live in Northern Ontario and don't have access to services that are considered critical here in the South. Lack of transportation, for example, due to distance, geography and climate, has a profound impact on the quality of life for every individual on the reserve. More disheartening, are the housing and living conditions that are not unlike those of a developing nation. Many have substandard educational facilities resulting in children

being years behind academically than their Southern counterparts. This is a developmental nightmare. The reality is; for First Nations children and youth who have a disability and live on a reserve, there are few choices and even less service options.

Christian Horizons has been challenged to look closely at the dire despair of children and youth with disabilities on First Nations reserves and extend our support. In our partnership with First Nations leadership, we have started to ask ourselves a set of questions that lie at the very root of the discrepancies between First Nations children with disabilities and non-First Nations children that we support:

- Are First Nation's children with disabilities worthy of supports and services?
- Is educating First Nations children worth investing in at the same level as non-First Nations children?
- Should First Nations children and youth be able to expect the same funding and care in health and mental health services?

These questions may have seemingly obvious answers, however, facts and realities reveal a different truth and set of beliefs. As a sector who knows all too well the impact of discrimination and inequality on vulnerable people, there is a responsibility to advocate for First Nations children with disabilities and include them as valuable members of our sector and society. OASIS has a history of reaching out to agencies, families, government and communities to advocate for those who need supports to live as independently as possible, to enjoy a safe and healthy environment and to be part of an inclusive community. The crisis for First Nations children with disabilities is no exception to this support!

If you would like to know how you can help First Nations children with disabilities; check out [www.fncaresociety.com](http://www.fncaresociety.com) or email [pburston@christian-horizons.org](mailto:pburston@christian-horizons.org).

# THE FAITH AND CULTURE INCLUSION NETWORK

IS PROUD TO SPONSOR A VERY SPECIAL CONFERENCE



**The Focus:** First Nations' children and youth with disabilities, First Nations, and organizations supporting people with disabilities within their faith and culture

 **Location:** Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre in Toronto  
Al Green Theatre  
750 Spadina (corner Bloor St.)

Conveniently located near public transit and parking

**Date:** February 25, 2009

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Registration:** 9:00 a.m.

**Keynote Speaker:** Cindy Blackstock, C.E.O of First Nations' Child and Youth Caring Society of Canada



Cindy will present a dynamic address on the contributions First Nations have made to Canadian Society, and the challenges in supporting community members with disabilities and their families



**Speaker:** Jonathon Thompson, Director  
Health and Social Development  
Assembly of First Nations

**Musical Presentation:** Melanie Ferris  
Hunting Hawk Communications



**Registration:** No charge to attend. Advance registration required at [firstnations@reena.org](mailto:firstnations@reena.org) including your Name and Organization

**Please note:** Light refreshments will be available

Lunch is not provided