



# OASIS focus

A PUBLICATION OF ONTARIO AGENCIES SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS · SUMMER 2008

## BRIAN YOUNG ELECTED PRESIDENT OF OASIS BOARD



Brian Young was elected to the position of OASIS Board President at the Annual General Meeting held in Niagara Falls in May, 2008. During his six years of OASIS, Brian has held the positions of Director and Vice-President.

Brian's strong commitment to the Developmental Services Sector has been cultivated through years of voluntary commitment. Through his additional involvement on boards and committees, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Canada, Simcoe Community Services, leadership in his local church and a number of Human Resources Associations, Brian has developed strong leadership skills in board governance.

Brian is also passionate about helping not-for-profit organizations run themselves as successful businesses without losing sight of the people they are designed to support. Many organizations have benefited from his professional Human Resources expertise - often at no charge.

Brian becomes President of OASIS at a critical time in Developmental Services. As the government begins to operationalize their Transformation agenda, Brian's leadership and expertise will be invaluable in developing the OASIS response to Transformation.

## REV IT UP!

"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 Caesar's 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 auditorium (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 will match Caesar's of Las Vegas. Of course, the traditional golf tournament has been arranged and plans are underway for alternative activities to possibly entice more partners to attend just for fun. How about a wine tour in the county or a shopping spree to a prime-store factory outlet? Arranging opportunities for learning is the priority and our Program Committee is in the process of searching out knowledgeable, engaging and 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 to Windsor-Essex in 2009! We hope to see you there.

**Xavier Noordormeer**  
*Executive Director*  
*Community Living Windsor*





# PAST PRESIDENT REMEMBERED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

## UPCOMING OASIS BOARD MEETINGS:

September 10-11, 2008  
*Ottawa*

October 22-23, 2008  
*Brantford*

## UPCOMING OASIS EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:

July 22, 2008 *Toronto*

## 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.



Gerry Sutton recently completed his second year as President of OASIS and has moved into the position of Past President. Gerry has often told the story of how George Braithwaite approached him at a Labour Relations session some five

years ago, talked him into joining the OASIS Board of Directors and told him he thought he would be a good President. Gerry thought, "Well I don't know about that, but I'll think about joining the Board." As Gerry always did when he got involved with something new, he researched the product, and with OASIS he liked what he saw; the concept of providing support to agency Board of Directors and management. He was impressed with what OASIS had accomplished in their first six years and felt the potential for further growth was possible. The first AGM and Conference he attended was in 2002 in London and he has been to each one since then.

When he became President in 2006, our membership was 88 agencies and when he completed his second term, our membership was at 140 agencies. Gerry is a strong believer in creating awareness about the work we do. One of the first steps he took as President was sending an information package to all non OASIS member agencies in the Developmental Services Sector. The result after the first mail out was 10 new members. Every opportunity Gerry has had, he has spoken of, "the great work OASIS does with no paid staff, no office location and mostly depending on the internet." He continues to be a wonderful ambassador for OASIS. Gerry has had a number of meetings with a variety of Ministry and government officials during his term as President. He was

always well received and had a wonderful knack for stating the point in as few words as possible. He was careful to ensure his message was reflective of what the majority of members felt was important. Gerry wanted to keep our members well informed about issues that may impact the Developmental Services Sector. George, as President before him, along with the assistance of David Ferguson, set the bar high in regards to communication. Gerry, as president and Andy Rotsma as his Support Executive Director, had big shoes to fill. Combining high quality communication with a growing membership strengthened the power of OASIS and its value to members.

Gerry did a number of great things as our President, perhaps most significant was the opportunity he created for OASIS members to participate in a program at Queen's School of Business. Through Gerry's efforts, Queen's provided a one week training session this past June that filled up within days of the first notification. As a matter of fact, it might be the only notice that was sent to our members only once! Gerry's advocacy convinced the Ministry of Community and Social Services to match a subsidy offered to the first 30 OASIS members by the Oakville Foundation For Intellectually Handicapped People. Gerry is hopeful that this opportunity will be repeated in future years.

Looking forward, Gerry has articulated his hope that more member agencies get involved in Accreditation. He, along with Molly Croke and Andy Rotsma, are currently preparing a report for the Board that will encourage more agencies to get started on the road towards Accreditation.

Now in the role of Past President, Gerry has no intention of slowing down. Halton Region service agencies are changing their residential intake process to include family representation and Gerry is one of the first family members to be asked to take on this important role. Many thanks to Gerry Sutton. Because of his leadership efforts, OASIS and the Developmental Services Sector have greatly benefited. We know Gerry will continue to be a strong and effective supporter.

**Andy Rotsma**  
*Executive Director*  
*Community Living Oakville*

## OASIS/ QUEEN'S EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



It all started with one man's dream, one man, who believed that an organization is as strong as its leadership. This belief fuelled OASIS Board President, Gerald Sutton, to act on his vision that leaders of Developmental Service Agencies deserve the best education available. Mr. Sutton approached Queen's School of Business, ranked #1 in Canada, to create a program tailored to the unique culture and challenges of our sector. On June 15, 2008, 40 leaders from across Ontario gathered in Kingston, to participate in the

first Executive Leadership Program for the Developmental Services Sector.

Top notch instructors shared their expertise in management and high performance teams, marketing, board governance, managing risk, human resources and strategic planning. Case studies from international corporations were used to demonstrate common mistakes, best practices and solutions to specific challenges. Extracting valuable lessons and applications along the way, participants learned the importance of personal, organizational and external awareness to maneuver the ever-changing climate of our work environment.

Worth noting, was the overall experience of attending a Queen's School of Business Program at the Donald Gordon Conference Centre. Emphasis was not only on quality education, but also on delivery with an overall wellness approach. Opportunities were offered to explore the city, participate in team or individual recreational activities or experience a new sport such as rock climbing or hot yoga. Food was prepared and presented impressively to say the least! Perhaps most notable, was the engaged staff team that were attentive to every detail and demonstrated a happy, healthy work environment.

There was value in the informal education as well. Gathering with colleagues from across the province gave opportunity to share insights and collaborate to ultimately improve the leadership we provide.

Special thanks to Gerry Sutton for his inspiration and advocacy in making this program possible, to the Oakville Foundation for Intellectually Handicapped People for a \$1000 subsidy offered to the first 30 agencies to register a participant for the program and to the Ministry of Community and Social Services for matching that subsidy. As a Queen's Alumni himself, Gerry negotiated on our behalf with the Queen's School of Business to offer the program to OASIS participants at a reduced rate making this endeavour a true partnership involving three separate stakeholders.

With another session being planned for next spring, there is a vision that more leaders in our sector will receive the highest quality business education available in Canada in hopes that the knowledge will be transferred through our agencies and impact the quality of service provided by OASIS members.

**Corey Allison**  
*Director of Marketing and Development  
Lambton County Developmental Services*

## GEORGE BRAITHWAITE RECEIVES ANNIE OLIVER AWARD



Long time OASIS Board Member, George Braithwaite is the newest recipient of the Annie Oliver Award. As one of the founding Board members of OASIS George has served a total of eight years

on the OASIS Board of Directors. During his years with OASIS, George has served as a Director at Large, Vice President, President and Past President.

George has invested, literally, thousands of hours of volunteer time on behalf of OASIS. He has traveled many miles using all modes of transportation in all types of weather and has endured hotels and motels that have seen more than a few minor hockey tournaments! George's time and efforts have left an indelible impact on the Developmental Services Sector.

George has been one of the OASIS representatives to both the Provincial Network and the Partnership Table, and was able to 'speak' as both a parent and an OASIS representative. On these committees, George worked consistently to develop relationships with other stakeholders and the Ministry. His involvement and development of these relationships provided OASIS with unprecedented access to senior Ministry officials, including former Deputy Minister Kevin Costante, who commented that he viewed George as a 'friend'.

George has exemplified the mission of OASIS through his tireless efforts, strong leadership and numerous activities on behalf of people with developmental disabilities. He is a deserving recipient of the Annie Oliver Award. We wish him well in his retirement from the OASIS Board; a retirement that OASIS will, no doubt, bring him out of, sooner rather than later.

The Annie Oliver Award for Excellence, named after the founding President of OASIS, Annie Oliver, is awarded each year for outstanding contributions to the work of OASIS.

# 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM



In early May, the Boards of Niagara Support Services and Niagara Training & Employment Agency co-hosted the 11th Annual OASIS Conference & AGM in Niagara Falls. The Doubletree Resort Lodge and Spa, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, was a great venue for three days of professional development workshops, networking, and a little fun! Conference registration reached more than 250 people including sponsors, exhibitors, and delegates representing over 70 of the OASIS member agencies.

The Honourable Minister Madeleine Meilleur attended the welcome dinner. She updated OASIS on the provincial strategy for the Developmental Services sector and expressed appreciation for the staff and boards that make Ontario a welcoming and

inclusive place for people with developmental disabilities.

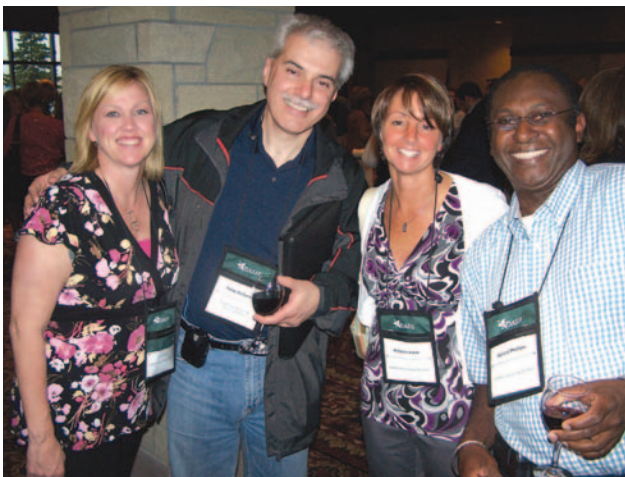
Another highlight of the conference was certainly the keynote presentation by Craig and Marc Kielburger, brothers who founded Free the Children in their early teens. Their message encouraged everyone present to shift their focus from acting individually to being passionate and knowledgeable global citizens. They showed us that it's possible to accomplish incredible changes that improve lives and communities when we work together towards a common goal.

As always, networking opportunities were plentiful! Delegates got to know one another during a golf tournament, a city tour, cocktail receptions, the live auction and a great evening of music and dancing. Many thanks to the Windsor-Essex County Planning Committee for hosting the hospitality event and providing lots to look forward to at next year's conference.

During the AGM a new slate of officers was named to the OASIS Board of Directors including Brian Young, President, Gerald Sutton, Past President, Judy Reid, Vice President Volunteer, John Bedell, Treasurer, Ann Kenney, Vice President Executive Director, Sherry Kerr, Secretary, Bonnie Dinning, Director at Large, Denis McClelland, Director, Brian Dunne, Director, Molly Croke, Director, Michael Humes, Director, Jane Joris, Director. George Braithwaite received the Annie Oliver Award in recognition of his dedication to OASIS.

By all accounts the conference was a great event. We look forward to getting together again next spring to share thoughts, make contacts and discuss new ideas that will make the sector a better place for the people we support.

**Andrew Lewis**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Niagara Support Services*



FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed. Please contact **Corey Allison** at 519-882-0933, ext. 40, [callison@lcds.on.ca](mailto:callison@lcds.on.ca)