

Family Net President's Report 2014

The past year has been, as other years, one of continued advocacy on behalf of children, youth, adults and families of persons with developmental and physical disabilities. With the pending provincial election, strong efforts were initiated to press for increased funding for our loved ones and we awaited the election outcome with interest.

With the Liberals being returned to power we now faced a new Minister of Social Development, Don McRae, as Minister Cadieu was moved to the Ministry of Family and Children. We met with Minister McRae on April 15, 2014 and had a very full discussion of our many concerns, especially those related to CLBC and the ever changing focus on funding restraints resulting in many reductions to service and families expected to do more. One issue, in particular related to the aging of parents and the fear of what will happen when they are no longer able to assist or are gone. Other concerns raised were the growing focus on Home Share rather than Group Homes and lack of proper monitoring of the home share option. We also questioned the role of Social Workers being lost and the ineffectiveness of the separate roles of Facilitator and Analyst resulting in raised expectations and then often disappointment as encouraged plans were then judged not possible. Transition challenges were again raised as a continuing problem.

In October we met with the new CEO of CLBC, Seonag Macrae. We expressed the same concerns raised with Minister McRae and were pleased with her acknowledgement that CLBC has undergone a difficult period and she looked forward to effecting changes.

At Inclusion BC's AGM, we initiated a session on older parents and siblings which was well attended and provided good information. In September we learned that a new program called Services to Adults with Development Disabilities was set up in Burnaby to focus on aging adults 55 years and older. We welcome this new 18 month pilot initiative and have already suggested that the age be flexible as we are now aware of adults experiencing challenges at an earlier age. However, we do wonder how CLBC connects with this new initiative.

Efforts continue to upgrade our web site and wish to thank Karen Philipchuk and Linda Derkach for undertaking this. In closing I wish to thank the board for their continued commitment over the past year and the tremendous support given me in my last year as President.

Anita Dadson
President, FamilyNet