



**President's Report  
Annual General Meeting  
November 21, 2019**

**A. Re-Imagining Community Inclusion**

This past year will likely go down as heralding the most significant changes in community living since the formation of Community Living BC – or at least I sincerely hope so.

As with any large organization or movement, changes often come slowly and appear at times to move at a glacial pace. And while there was a flurry of very public activity early in the year, things are now operating more quietly, but hopefully ever forward.

With the appointment of Minister Shane Simpson, the community living movement and its very important mandate to serve British Columbia's most vulnerable people has experienced the most positive and hopeful period since 2002 and the devolution to CLBC.

For six months, representatives of FamilyNet along with many other self-advocates, family members, advocates, service providers, and staff of CLBC and government convened to ponder the challenge from the Minister: *Re-Imagine Community Inclusion*. Six, full-day sessions were held in Vancouver to consider identified issues. On behalf of FamilyNet, I want to thank Frank Reimer, Anita Dadson, Cathie Waddington and Susan Waldie who travelled with me and put in very long days to ensure that the concerns and issues of FamilyNet were expressed at the meetings.

In March of 2019, the draft report of this process was tabled, agreed to by the participants including FamilyNet representatives and now can be found on the government website by googling *Re-Imagining Community Inclusion*. The most significant page in this document is the RCI Roadmap that can be found on page 11. This page contains the salient points that participants felt must be addressed and is recommended reading for family members and friends of people with

diverse abilities. It will likely guide the next ten years of community living evolution and progress.

But the report contains very high-level destinations, milestones and steps that need much discussion and fleshing out in order to become practical and real - and not just preferences and aspirations.

Hopefully work has begun to breathe life into this plan. We await with baited-breath.

### **B. New CEO for Community Living BC**

In May 2019, Minister Shane Simpson announced the appointment of a new CEO for CLBC. Ross Chilton, long time Executive Director for the Community Living Society, assumed his new role in August. Ross has a track record of advancing community inclusion in social service agencies. We look forward to a future meeting between Ross and representatives of FamilyNet.

### **C. Inclusion BC's Family Advisory Committee**

As a member of this committee, I join a number of other family members - usually via teleconference - to provide feedback on important initiatives and to identify challenges and concerns. On our last teleconference in September, members were asked to identify their priorities and issues stated in the Re-Imagining Community Inclusion Roadmap.

Feedback has been gathered and will be discussed on November 18 at the next meeting of the Family Advisory Committee.

### **D. FamilyNet Goals Unchanged**

We continue to work toward what we believe are the elements of an effective and responsive service system:

- **Respect** for individuals, families and **inclusion** in planning and decision-making
- **Accessibility** in that the system is simple and understandable
- **Openness and Trust** that all relevant information is clearly communicated in a timely way
- **One point of contact** such as a case manager
- **Proactive Planning** for times of transition
- **Safeguards** built into the system, and
- **Accountability** to the individual, family, and government.

### **E. Remembering Cathy Grant**

In February we were shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of Cathy Grant, long time FamilyNet Board Member, friend and self-advocate par excellence. Cathy was an amazing person. She faced down many challenges in her life while retaining her optimism, friendly attitude and unending spunk. A formidable advocate for herself and for others, Cathy lived life on her own terms – independently and with dignity – enjoying her life as she chose. Cathy wrote a blog in which she chronicled her travels around her community, unleashing her articulate thoughts about restaurants and accessibility, among other things. Everyone who knew and loved her will miss her terribly but will be comforted in the knowledge that she made a huge difference in the lives of people with disabilities, demonstrating every day what community living really means and living her life to the full.

### **F. Moving Forward with Hope and Determination**

Last year at this time, I wrote:

*At last I see more than a glimmer of optimism for community living. As with many things, the evolution of human services moves slowly – but now perhaps in the right direction which has not been the case for a long time.*

And with the appointment of Minister Shane Simpson, and subsequent appointment of Dr. Michael Prince as Chair of Community Living BC, perhaps our hopes, dreams and future for people served by community living will move much closer to reality.

Linda Derkach,  
President, BC FamilyNet