



**President's Report
Annual General Meeting
December 6, 2022**

Introduction

At the beginning of 2022 and as the pandemic dragged on, many initiatives of CLBC and Inclusion BC progressed with the magic of ZOOM. Even as we became tired of meeting each other through our computer screens, it became evident that ZOOM meetings offer many advantages and will probably be with us for many years to come.

While not ideal, digital relationships have been formed and maintained and many worthwhile endeavours have moved forward. As well, the benefit of meeting with no associated travel costs, and our precious commodity of time intact have become almost priceless.

At the beginning of 2022, many were still getting their 2nd, 3rd and booster shots. And with the onslaught of RSV and a very bad influenza season, it does not look positive for any in-person meetings in the near future.

1. CLBC Covid - 19 Teleconference Information Sessions

Many FamilyNet Board members attended these sessions led by Ross Chilton, CLBC CEO, Michael Prince, CLBC Board Chair and Dr. Daniele Behn-Smith continued from 2021. The call on January 24 promised that we are moving toward better days now that there are very good vaccines and a high rate of vaccination in BC. More testing is happening although there were still staff shortages at this time. Parents were able to pay family members where staff were not available.

On March 10, 2022, Dr. Behn Smith announced that some masking mandates would be repealed. Masks would still be required in health care facilities, doctors' offices, dentists, buses, airports and other places where people are in close quarters. The ability for anyone and everyone to get up to date, factual information in an easy format was very successful. Calls have recently resumed.

2. Reimagining Community Inclusion Steering Committee

The RCI Planning Group that began in 2020 or thereabouts, morphed into the RCI Steering Committee, indicating that planning was in the past and that more practical initiatives were now underway that would give life to the plan. As FN President and member of the Planning Group, I accepted an invitation from Ross Chilton to become a member of the Steering Committee. As such, I joined the task group on Housing as I felt that was where I could best contribute, and with so many challenges in residential options, continues to be an important focus for FamilyNet.

Important Issues from the perspective of FamilyNet remain:

- **Funding:** Is there a need to increase government funding or is there an ability to be flexible with the funding we now have?
- **Safeguards:** Regardless of how creative and forward-thinking our plans, safeguards remain a critical component of a safe and happy life.
- **Care Coordination:** In the past, one of the roles of the Social Worker was the coordination of care. Individuals knew that their Social Worker could be contacted for any facet of their support. This role needs to be reinstated.
- **Continuing Oversight and Evaluation:** Now that there is an extensive and detailed plan, a body constituted from members of the working and planning groups needs to continue to measure progress and ensure coordination of activities. Gaps and overlaps in service are far too common in any enterprise.

As a member of the RCI Steering Committee, I attended videoconference meetings on April 5, June 20 and October 20, 2022. The focus for all meetings was Housing, Employment, Indigenous Issues and Health Services.

I continued to bring forward the following:

- The need for BCHMC Portable Rent Subsidies
- The need to document practical examples of successful housing options created in community by families that could be models for others going forward
- Community Living organizations generally do not have the expertise to initiate housing developments and should not be expected to put precious support dollars toward the development of accessible housing.

I also brought the parent perspective as well as being an advocate for folks who do not have family involvement.

I also expressed from time to time that there is not enough parent and family representation on the committees.

On Friday, December 2, 2022, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, CLBC and Inclusion BC released the Workplan of the Planning Committee and Steering Committee that we have been working on for several years. This was done in advance of United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3.

3. Inclusion BC Family Advisory Committee

On January 21, 2022, BCFN Board Member Susan Waldie and I attended a meeting of the Inclusion BC Family Advisory Committee. Issues discussed include the Family Leadership Series lead by IBC, the need for mental health supports, low wages that keep people living below the poverty line and our satisfaction with current safeguards.

We also attended a meeting on Thursday, March 31. We discussed the Inclusive Education Handbook.

4. Meeting with Adam Walker, MLA

As part of a series of meetings with MLA's throughout BC, I participated with Inclusion BC on a Zoom call March 8, 2022 to introduce community living issues to new MLAs. Along with another parent in Parksville, we discussed priorities such as housing, the rate of unemployment and mental health issues.

5. Inclusion BC Parent Education Series and BC EdAccess Offerings

IBC has organized a series of information sessions for parents in various regions around the province, the topics of which are determined by the attendees.

On October 20, I joined Karla Verschoor, Erika Cedillo and Richard McIntosh to talk about the history of the community living movement. Bringing back vivid memories of segregated schools, Wolf Wolfensberger, and the closure of Woodlands, Glendale and Tranquille was a revelation of how far we have come. And how far we still have to go. At another time, my daughter Elaine and I talked about the importance of self-determination in our lives, and how it has played out.

6. Review of the Adult Guardianship Act, Part 3: Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect

On June 6, I participated in a review of this legislation led by the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC along with a large number of other folks.

We discussed and gave opinions on such topics as:

- How do people actually get help?

- What safeguards are in place?
- Who needs protection?
- Should CLBC be a designated agency? Are they not actually investigating themselves? (Conclusion of the group: CLBC should **not** be a Designated Agency under the Act.)
- Are the powers the right ones?
- Who investigates? Results? Accountability?
- The need for supported decision-making
- The need to get information into people's hands easily
- Is there access to an advocate?
- The more eyes on people the safer they are – and this applies to everyone!!
- More safeguards are needed!

7. Conclusion

In my President's Report last year, I said: "The year 2021 has been one of discussion and planning and hoping for better things in community living while keeping our loved ones safe, happy, engaged and resilient."

This year, I will just say, "Ditto".

Plans, initiatives, activities, task groups, steering groups – are all continuing to move forward.

As always, BC FamilyNet continues to advocate for:

- Multi-level **safeguards** for everyone served by community living
- **Care Coordination** to ensure no one slips through the cracks
- **Easy access** to the system and **flexibility** when change is needed
- **Open communication** among all partners.

And finally, as family members who have been involved in community living for up to 60 years, we know that much of what has been discussed and debated is not really new – but has been refined and updated. We have wanted and worked toward all these things for our sons, daughters, sisters, brothers and friends for a long, long time.

*Linda Derkach, President
December 6, 2022*