

Stories and Letters outlining concerns and impact of funding and service cuts:

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Received January 30, 2004

To: Christy Clark  
Cc: Gordon Hogg ; Gordon Campbell; FamilyNet

Subject: Interim Authority

Hon. Christy Clark

My name is Cathy Grant, Former member of the TSC and Interim Authority. I am a disabled woman who is a self-advocate. I believed in the spirit of the new changes in governance because it envisioned CHOICE AND CHANGE for disabled persons and their families. Now that budgets have been cut and Service Providers are making the choices, Gordon Hogg and Doug Walls have resigned, Chris Haynes fired, I PLEAD with you to STOP the process before more damage is done in Community Living. Many people, including myself, are terrified at the consequences of what has happened and is happening.

Sincerely Cathy Grant.

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Received Jan. 30, 2004

I really like your web site and I am impressed with the way you communicate with the "people above".

I have been working, in group homes supporting adult men with developmental disabilities, for the past 8 years at (name of association deleted). I love my work and want to do the best I can to ensure that people with disabilities can live their life to the fullest. In 2002, I decided to go back to school and get the CSW certificate in the hope that I can provide better service to those I care for. I continued to work full time while I was in school (full time as well for three semesters). I graduated in June 2003 and proud of it. By the way, around 50 workers from this Association are now taking the CSW course at the College.

In March of 2003, our Association went through the motion of voluntary cuts and closed a group home and shuffled residents around. As a residential worker, I found myself having to choose which clients I would follow in this move. It was a heartbreaking decision to make but with everyone's cooperation the transition went fairly smooth. Now the Association is in the midst of doing another round of voluntary cuts. Again the people we serve will be moving out of their environment, facing staff changes and therefore creating tremendous disruption in their lives, once more.

In addition to these voluntary cuts, the government is determined to get a 35 million cut, out of me and the 15,000 other workers in the Province, and this is on top of what they already took away from us. I am referring to bill 29 and the ripping of our collective agreement, eliminating "parity with the Health sector and successorship.

Our contract has expired. The BCACL has put pressure on the Employers to vote in favor of a lock out, mentioning threats coming from Mr Haynes about more draconian measures if they don't get their savings from the workers. Now they have their vote. 73% apparently voted yes. What will happen? Will we be locked out! If so, we will likely go on strike. The Campbell Government is cutting too deep in this sector.

The Government is in chaos, we have a new MCFD Minister, we don't have a CEO for the Interim Authority, the BCACL have their lock out vote, the UBA is at the table negotiating and I just read tonight that the UBA have also, like Family Net, asked for a moratorium on proposed budget cuts in the Community Living Sector, so who knows what will happen!

Our lives and the lives of the most vulnerable are filled with uncertainty in this turmoil.

I realized that Family Net is the voice of the family but as a worker I considered myself part of it. My concern is that if the government insist in cutting funding, not only will we see reduction in services but likewise we might see a reduction in the quality of the remaining services. If they tender contract to the lowest bidder, chances are the work will be performed by less qualified people.

But do they care!

- from a concerned front line Residential Care Worker

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Received January 22, 2004

Hi there!

I'm finding myself more and more drawn to action as those around me struggle with difficulties imposed by budget limitations and frightening policy change.

I have a good friend who is a self advocate and a sixteen-year old cousin with a disability. I'm afraid for both of them as the future seems likely to be decided upon by people who may not hold the welfare of children and adults with disabilities as their top priorities. Basically, I want to help ensure that my friends' have the same bright futures ahead of them as I see for myself. I haven't been involved in any political movements in any "formal" ways, but I'm interested to know of any ways I might help my friends and family have a better run at it.

Thanks for your time,

Emily  
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Received Jan. 6, 2004

I have a daughter with multiple disabilities who is medically fragile. I have grave concerns that her care will be compromised and she will be another statistic in the hospital ward. How can I help here in Penticton?

Maria Koleszar  
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Received Jan. 4, 2004

The \*letter is terrific and says clearly what so many have been thinking these past months. I can appreciate the time and effort that must have gone into this campaign especially recognizing that all the work is done by family members with ongoing heavy responsibilities. It's hard to imagine how the decision makers can continue to ignore the concerns expressed so eloquently in your letter. Let us hope that it will be a happy New Year and please let me know how I can help.  
Sincerely, Connie Clarke

\*letter referred to above is FamilyNet Dec. 22 letter to Minister Hogg and David Driscoll posted on our web site  
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