

institution watch

PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA



50 years

Canadian
Association for
Community Living

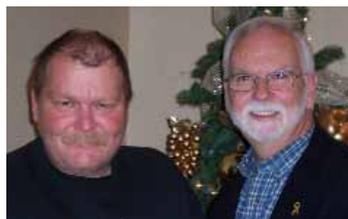
Diversity includes.

WINTER 2008 ● Volume 4, No. 1

Monitoring the progress toward a vision of full community living for *all* persons with intellectual disabilities.

"An institution is any place in which people who have been labeled as having an intellectual disability are isolated, segregated and/or congregated. An institution is any place in which people do not have, or are not allowed to exercise control over their lives and their day to day decisions. An institution is not defined merely by its size."

Deinstitutionalization Task Force



JANUARY 2008

MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE

Richard Ruston and Norm McLeod,
Task Force Co-chairs

The September 2007 edition of *Institution Watch* provided a focus on the efforts of Ontario as it moves toward closure of its three remaining institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities. In this edition the Task Force is pleased to focus attention on the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and New Brunswick. These three provinces demonstrate that not only is it possible to close institutions but that in fact such province wide closures have already been achieved in this country. The fact that these provinces have closed their institutions stands as an undeniable testament to the lack of necessity for these facilities elsewhere. The fact that these provinces have been able to move away from an institutional model provides clear evidence that no person 'need' live in an institution and that there are more appropriate community based options.

Why, then, do institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities still exist in other jurisdictions? Is it because the citizens in these other provinces place less value on the lives and contributions of persons with disabilities? Are persons with intellectual disabilities so different in these other provinces; their needs and aspirations so very different that they need to be segregated from society? The obvious answer is no. Institutions continue to exist because we fail to act....fail to act on the

This is a newsletter written and produced by the People First of Canada-CACL Joint Task Force on Deinstitutionalization. For more information, contact Don Gallant at (416) 661-9611 or Shelley Rattai at (866) 854-8915.

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research and evidence that clearly demonstrates the advantage of, and preference for, community living . . . fail to act in providing the needed supports and services within community that will enable persons with intellectual disabilities to participate fully and contribute in meaningful ways in their community. Ultimately institutions continue to exist because of the lack of political will to quite simply do the right thing.

We commend the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and New Brunswick for being leaders both nationally and internationally. We commend them for providing absolute proof that a system that responds appropriately to the needs of individuals and families does not have to rely on an institutional model. We commend them for demonstrating that it is indeed possible to develop, deliver and sustain community based alternatives. We commend them for the strength to act, and to do the right thing!

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



MESSAGE FROM **THE HONOURABLE SHAWN SKINNER**

**Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and
Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador**

More than a quarter century ago, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador made a decision that institutions would no longer 'play a role in the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities'. At that time, our province made a commitment to the closure of our existing institutions and set about developing a system of community based supports and services that would enable persons with intellectual disabilities to live in the community. We are very proud of the fact that Newfoundland and Labrador was the first province in Canada to close its institutions, and thus demonstrate that all persons with intellectual disabilities had both the right and ability to live in the community.

Since that time, and with the support of and in collaboration with community partners such as the Association for Community Living and People First, our province has also moved away from other congregate housing options such as group homes; instead relying on the provision of individualized supports and services to enable greater choice and self determination for persons with intellectual disabilities. Our efforts have certainly confirmed the fact that all people, regardless of type or extent of intellectual disability, can be supported to live valuable and contributing lives as members of our communities.

In this province we have moved well beyond any debate as to whether or not persons with disabilities belong in community, rather we fully acknowledge their fundamental right to live within community as fully included and contributing citizens. This is a given. As a government, our challenge is to ensure that the supports and services we develop and the policy framework within which these are delivered remain

reflective of the known needs of persons with disabilities and their families.

In closing, and as Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, I would commend the Task Force on its ongoing efforts to raise awareness regarding the inappropriate institutionalization of persons with intellectual disabilities that still exists in this country. Clearly, the institutionalization of persons with intellectual disabilities stands in sharp contrast to our collective understanding of disability and to our commitment, as Canadians, to a society that is supportive of full inclusion and diversity. Our communities are only stronger through the inclusion of persons with disabilities; our provinces stronger through that inclusion.



FULL AND CONTRIBUTING CITIZENS

Melanie Thomas
Executive Director,
Newfoundland and Labrador
Association for Community Living

In the mid 1980s the province of Newfoundland and Labrador made the landmark decision to close Exon House and the Childrens Home therefore moving children and adults with developmental disabilities into alternate settings in the community. This decision demonstrated a profound shift in thinking and was hoped by many individuals and families to trigger a wave in deinstitutionalization efforts nation wide. In 1992 the province continued with this trend and began the process of transitioning persons with developmental disabilities from other institutional settings to more appropriate community based services. Over 100 persons were moved from the province's Waterford Hospital into more appropriate community settings where they have been supported to live as full and contributing citizens. Appropriate supports and services were provided to both individuals and families to ensure that the transitions were self-directed, engaging and holistic in scope.

Upon reflecting it is apparent that deinstitutionalization efforts in this province have planted the seeds needed for long-term sustainability and community support. The emergence of the provincial Supported Employment model has contributed immensely to promoting the independence and participation of persons with developmental disabilities in both the economic and social fabric of their



Ken Caul at work in his company workshop.

THIS RADIO WORKS

The radio broadcasts the following advertisement in December, 2007. 'NOTIONS, 79 Main Street, Stephenville is celebrating 20 years in business. Ken Caul is celebrating with a whole new look, a new product line with lots of in-store specials. So drop by today and enjoy the warm atmosphere and friendly staff at Notions, 79 Main Street, Stephenville.'

Ken Caul is a leader and a trailblazer in the community living movement. Ken is 47 and the sole owner of Notions Ltd.

As a young child, Ken was supported in a very loving family. When his sister was born, having down's syndrome as did Ken, the stresses on the family were too much for the parents to handle. At this time there were no programs or support for individuals or families.

Ken's mom, Mrs. Nellie Caul (86) says, "we were told the newly opened institution (Exon House) in

St. John's was said to be the very best thing ever for people with intellectual disabilities". Cornered and without options at the time, the devastating decision was made and Ken was placed in Exon House. Mrs Caul continues, "It was a lie. On the first day, Ken was put on drugs and was placed with many people with severe behavior issues". She believes he was medically neglected. Over the next 10 years her son lost his limited speech, spending his days aimlessly passing a broken radio from hand to hand.

Mrs. Caul and her close friend the late Mrs. Carmel Tobin, who also had a son (Earl) at the institution, drove across the island at every opportunity, fought and scraped for 10 years, until finally an advocacy effort arose that led to the closure of the institution.

Upon returning to his community, Ken was supported to start a small business contracting from the paper mill. The business was expanded to include computerized engraving. This involved serious financing requiring Ken to incorporate his business. In this process, supported decision making was placed directly into the by-laws of his company. He borrowed significant amounts of money on two different occasions and paid off all loans faithfully.

In 20 years, there have been some remarkable challenges. There have been two significant expansions of Ken's business even in the face of the closure of the major industry in a one industry town. His company bought out his major competitor.

Ken now shares a house with Earl in Stephenville. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and supports a number of community events and activities. Ken is very active in the community.

There's nothing remarkable about Ken's story. That is unless being the first person with a significant intellectual disability in the world to establish a business, secure financing from traditional lenders while putting into place a working model of supported decision-making and becoming a central figure in the closure of institutions in Canada is considered remarkable.

This radio works!

communities. Similarly, the spirit of partnership among individuals, families, communities as well as provincial and federal governments has been instrumental to the successes in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are pleased at our provincial government's longstanding leadership and reliance on community supports as well as the continued desire to ensure supports and services are responsive to individual needs. Building on the considerable strides we have made in the past 20 years, we look to a future where all individuals are included and welcomed as full and contributing citizens.



NO ROLE FOR INSTITUTIONS

**Ken O'Brien
Manager, Employability
Services for Persons
with Disabilities,
Dept. of Human Resources,
Labour and Employment,
Newfoundland and Labrador**

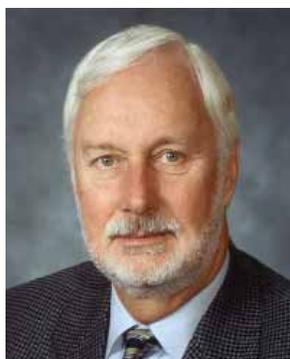
Newfoundland and Labrador supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community living. As a leader both nationally and internationally the province has a long and proud history of supporting children, youth and adults living with intellectual disabilities, and their families, to participate fully in their communities. More than twenty years ago the province set about developing a system of community based supports and services that would enable persons with intellectual disabilities to live in the community.

With the support of our community partners, the Association for Community Living and People First, we continue to work toward the goals of full citizenship and inclusion. We have enhanced the provision of individualized supports and

services to enable greater choice and self determination for persons with intellectual disabilities. The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment's efforts to develop and expand the Supported Employment model confirm our belief that all people, regardless of type or extent of intellectual disability, can be supported to make a valuable contribution to the economic and social life of our communities.

Deinstitutionalization and the concurrent development of community based services for all persons with intellectual disabilities has been a defining feature of our provincial model of service and support. It is a model based on the knowledge that persons with intellectual disabilities have the right to live in community and that with appropriate supports are embraced by community. In this province we have clearly demonstrated that institutions do not need to play a role in the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities.

BRITISH COLUMBIA



MESSAGE FROM **THE HONOURABLE CLAUDE RICHMOND**

**Minister of Employment and Income Assistance
Province of British Columbia**

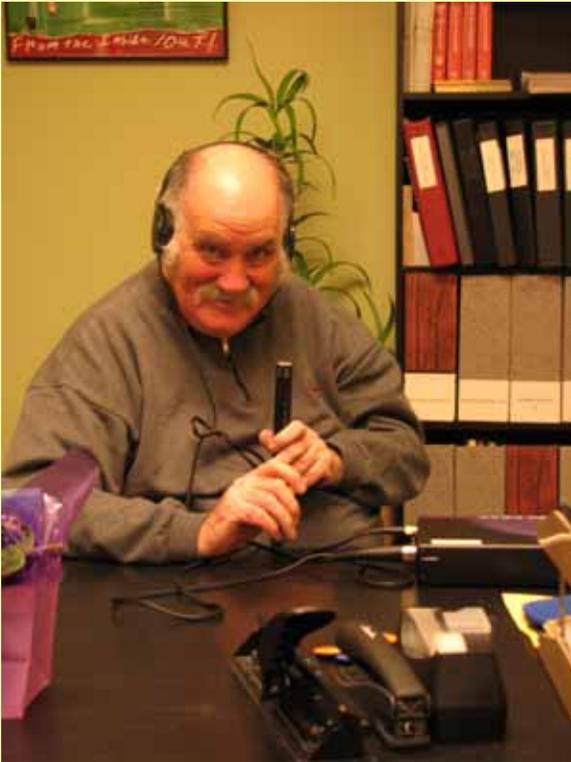
Silence: and the end of a painful era. In December 1984, the locks clicked shut for the last time at the Tranquille residential facility, located in the interior city of Kamloops. That moment crystallized a milestone achievement in British Columbia's history for adults with developmental disabilities. For the 325 adults who lived in Tranquille, the closure represented the beginning of a new life — a chance to be closer to their families and to become more involved and more appreciated in their home communities.

This closure marked the start of the decommissioning of all major institutions for those with developmental disabilities in British Columbia. When the final two residents of Woodlands moved to new homes in 1996, British Columbia became one of the first provinces in Canada to abolish this unenlightened type of confinement.

As a province, we have come a long way since the establishment of institutions here more than a century ago. At the time when Tranquille closed, I was the Government MLA for Kamloops, and Canadian beliefs about how people with developmental disabilities should be treated were shifting. To this day, I take great personal delight when one of these ex-Tranquille residents happily calls to me from across the street, at a baseball game or in the grocery store. I am convinced that the move towards community-based supports was only made possible through the strong support of families and critical local organizations.

Today it is understood that society as a whole benefits when those with disabilities have recognizable rights. These include the right to participate in their own home communities, to live in the same neighbourhood as their friends and family, to work if they are able and to embrace the future with the same optimism as other British Columbians.

Of course, there is more to do. Our Government, through the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, is working with businesses and local organizations to improve opportunities for people



Richard hosts The Community Living Show on Vancouver Co-op Radio.

NO PLACE TO BE

Richard MacDonald

Richard McDonald lived for 10 years in Woodlands Institution. Now he lives a fulfilling life in community and is an active self advocate. He is President of the BC Self Advocacy Foundation and sits on many committees and groups working to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. In a recent interview, Richard shared some of his views regarding deinstitutionalization and his involvement in the process.

'I wouldn't have my dog living in an institution. I wouldn't have it go through the abuse we'd gone through. I suggested for associations to gather together and work on closing down institutions. The longer

with disabilities. We have invited communities across the province to take up the '10 by 10 Challenge' and increase the employment of people with disabilities by 10 per cent by 2010, the year British Columbia has the privilege of hosting the international Paralympics. We have a robust \$20-million Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities and early in 2008 this program will include a component specifically tailored for those with developmental disabilities, to be delivered in partnership with Community Living British Columbia.

Our government has mounted a 10-year Disability Action Plan dedicated to building a province in which all British Columbians, regardless of their limitations, have real choices. We won't fail them.



A VISION OF FULL CITIZENSHIP

**Lois Hollstedt, Chair
Community Living British Columbia
(CLBC)**

British Columbia has long been recognized as a leader both nationally and internationally in the provision of supports and services that enable adults, children, youth and families living with developmental disabilities to participate in community life in valued roles.

The foundation for our current service delivery system was developed in large part as a result of the provincial government's decision to close Woodlands, Glendale and Tranquille, BC's three large institutions. The institutional closure process resulted in thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities moving back to their communities. I was involved in Kamloops with families and the local association when Tranquille was closed. I observed the process of individuals moving into the community where they have been able to access a variety of supports and services that have helped them to claim their rightful place as citizens. The process was challenging for individuals, families and communities, but today's reality of thousands of people living enriched lives outside of institutions is a testament to the success of the undertaking.

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) remains firmly committed to the legacy of the deinstitutionalization movement that occurred from 1975 - 1996. Our vision is one of full citizenship in which people with developmental disabilities lead good lives, have rich relationships with friends and family, financial security, choices in where and how they live their lives, employment opportunities and are accepted and valued as citizens. As a steward of this vision, CLBC is committed to fostering the growth of inclusive, supportive communities. CLBC supports the commitment of other jurisdictions to close Canada's remaining institutions.



AN ABIDING BELIEF IN COMMUNITY

Laney Bryenton
Executive Director
British Columbia Association for
Community Living

It has been almost twenty years now since we celebrated the announcement that the three large institutions in BC would close. It took lots of effort, goodwill, commitment, vision, and, above all, an abiding belief in community as the rightful place for every individual to live. The final person left the last large institution here in 1996 – unquestionably a huge achievement – but really only the beginning of our collective journey on the path to realize the vision of a full and inclusive life for every person with a developmental disability.

In 2001, BC began the very long process of transforming the service system through the creation of CLBC. This shift will bring about a more individualized, person-centred and family supportive approach to supporting and delivering services for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Even though more than five years have passed we are only part way through the transformation. Together, we are working through the ongoing challenge of imagining, rethinking and reshaping a system to better respond to and support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families throughout their lifespan.

The challenge will all be worth it when we witness all people living more inclusive, valued and contributing lives in communities where everyone belongs.

they're open the more abuse there is. The abuse had to be stopped. We had to have them closed down. Now that we've closed them down, other provinces have started closing them down also.'

'Life is great now. It feels good to live a normal life. Even on a fixed income you can do a lot of things. I got friends, do things that you normally can't do in an institution. I go bowling, go to the gym, take walks, shopping for my own home. You can get out and do things. You're not trapped. It's good because you meet a lot of people, when you're friendly like I am. They'll say 'Hey, he's got everything going for him'.

'I was in From the Inside/Out. I was one of the 28 people in that. It is important because it is the truth and people will say 'He was there, he knows what he's talking about'. I was in it to make sure everyone gets the support to get out.'

'I was part of the Woodlands Memorial Garden group. The Garden was the best thing that ever happened. It was incredible. It shows the public what happened at the institution. It was like telling the public not to let this happen again. The Memorial Garden is for self advocates, by self advocates. It's a gift for the future. We're telling everyone 'Keep this as a memorial — we have to remember the history'. It is our turn to make sure it doesn't happen. It is a reminder to other institutions that they should close. An institution is no place to be.'

NEW BRUNSWICK



MESSAGE FROM **THE HONOURABLE MARY SCHRYER**

Minister of Family and Community Services
Province of New Brunswick

Over the last three decades, New Brunswick has held firm to the position that all individuals have a right of citizenship to reside in their local communities with dignity, respect and receive the supportive services they require.

The 1970s and 1980s marked a profound shift away from institutionalization in New Brunswick and towards a new era of expanded community and home-support services.

The population at Centracare which once housed over 1,000 psychiatric beds has been reduced to 50, while the closure of the William Roberts School resulted in hundreds of children being returned to their local communities.

A FULL LIFE

In the mid to late 1980s, many individuals with an intellectual disability left institutions to live in the community. We offer this story as a tribute to one young man who lived a full life in a short amount of time.

Marc Roberts was institutionalized from the age of 2 months. He would spend the next 23 years of his life



Marc Roberts

residing in the Restigouche Hospital in Campbellton, N.B. – once “home” to many people with an intellectual disability. The 1980s were significant years for the deinstitutionalization movement in New Brunswick. Yet there were people who were considered to be extremely difficult to

Deinstitutionalization led to the development of an extensive network of community-based services designed to meet the development needs of individuals and their families. The Department of Family and Community Services provides supportive services to adults and in local communities through investments totalling \$127-million each year.

Our government believes individuals are best served if they achieve increased access to community life and receive the supportive services they require to live, whenever possible, independently. Since 2006, our government has nearly doubled the maximum subsidized hours of home-support services from 170 to 336 hours each month.

As we look to the future, our government has set ambitious goals to build upon our province’s history of celebrating the diversity of individuals and our common desire to be self reliant and to fully contribute to the community in which we live. We believe in building inclusive communities where individuals with intellectual disabilities can continue to live, learn, work and actively participate as valued and contributing members.



INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

André Lépine
Director, Adults with Disabilities and Senior
Services
Department of Family and Community
Services, New Brunswick.

Provincial disability organizations, including the New Brunswick Association for Community Living, have worked closely with Province of New Brunswick in the development of a New Brunswick Disability Framework based on the shared belief persons with disabilities are full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society.

They have also played a key role in the design of a pilot project testing new approaches in the provision of disability support for adults under age 65, with emphasis on individual development and community participation. The majority of adults aged 19 to 64 with a disability have unique needs and goals that differ from those of older seniors needing long term care.

The *Disability Support Program Pilot Project*, launched in April 2005, has been extended to March 31, 2008. Support for the provincial program is based on the same principles that guided the pilot project (empowerment and self-determination, rights and responsibilities, participation, individualization, respect, access, equality). The pilot project has been evaluated by an independent agency and consultation meetings have been held with internal and external stakeholders. Recommendations from the evaluation report and comments from the consultation meetings will be considered for the implementation of a province-wide program of flexible disability supports to adults with a disability. There is satisfaction with the emphasis on greater flexibility and personalized disability supports. There is strong support for a provincial program based on the same principles that guided the pilot.

The New Brunswick Association for Community Living has, for many years, been very helpful in bringing issues related to persons with a disability to Government's attention. The Association has also played a key role in developing and proposing innovative approaches to address these issues.

support in the community because of behavioural issues. Marc was one of those people who were at the "bottom of the barrel" and assumed by many to be unable to have a life in the community.

With the support of a local community agency Marc left the Restigouche Hospital in 1986 when he was 23 years old. His transition to the community was hard but he eventually became very independent. Marc was taking a lot of medications to help him control his behaviour but decided that he wanted to live without the medication. With significant difficulty Marc was successful in learning to cope without medication.

Marc's life in the community became meaningful and rich. He lived with 2 other men in a small group home and had lived for a while in his own apartment. Two years after leaving the institution, Marc secured a job with a government department as a mail carrier – a job that he would have for the rest of his life. He became connected to a lot of people and was known for his kindness to others. He developed a close relationship with a woman he had previously known in the institution.

Marc had made it very clear that he never wanted to return to the institution. He was determined to live his own life and he actively directed his own service planning meetings.

Marc was tragically killed in a car accident at the age of 31. The agency had arranged to have his funeral service in a chapel because they were afraid that a larger church would look too empty. On the day of his funeral the chapel was "packed" with people lined up outside who could not get in. Marc never knew his own family but he touched the lives of many in his community.



REAL OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Krista Carr
Executive Director
New Brunswick Association for Community Living

During the 1980s, New Brunswick made significant gains in moving people who have an intellectual disability out of institutions. In 1985, the Dr. William F. Roberts Hospital School, an institution for children and youth, was closed. This was coupled with significant investments in community-based programs to support children with intellectual and other disabilities to live with their families or with foster/adoptive families. Similarly, significant efforts were made to move adults with an intellectual disability out of two large psychiatric institutions in the province. One of those institutions, that once housed several hundred people with an intellectual disability, was closed in the late 1990s. As a result, many adults with an intellectual disability were supported to live in the community, usually in small group home arrangements.

NBACL has been an active advocate of deinstitutionalization efforts over the past 25 years. More recently, we have participated with other disability organizations and the provincial government on a pilot project to create a new disability support program for adults aimed at providing individualized and flexible disability supports to enable people with disabilities to live and participate in their communities, and to live in homes of their own.

As we continue to develop and expand progressive policies and programs to support people to live in their communities, we anticipate that people who have an intellectual disability will increasingly have real options and opportunities to live in homes of their own. Much progress has been made yet clearly work remains to be done on the development of strategies and concrete plans that will assist individuals to take their rightful place in community and we look forward to continuing to build on our success.



PROVINCIAL / TERRITORIAL UPDATES

ONTARIO

As part of the ministry's longstanding commitment to move from institutional care to community-based care, a study will be undertaken to assess facility residents' transitions into the community. The study will be led by a team of independent academics starting in the fall of 2007. The process will involve interviews with individuals who have moved from the facilities and their families so we can hear first-hand about their experiences with the move to community-based care. The study will seek to provide information about the outcomes of deinstitutionalization in Ontario and seek to increase understanding of what deinstitutionalization means for those leaving the facilities and their families. The findings of the study are intended to help inform the ministry's future policies in the developmental services sector and provide information that will improve supports in the sector.

As of October 31, 2007, 563 residents have moved into the community from the three remaining facilities since the final closure initiative was announced in September 2004. There are only 392 residents remaining in the three facilities — Huronia Regional Centre (110); Rideau Regional Centre (204); and Southwestern Regional Centre (78). The process appears to still be on track for a final closure of all three facilities by March 31, 2009.



Southwestern Regional Centre

*This is one of the best things that the government has done; closing all institutions before March 2009. I think one word sums it up for the individuals going through this transition from institutions to a home — **FREEDOM.***

Melissa Sine, Ontario

MANITOBA

The Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) population is 345 as of November 2007. There has been no announcement by government to close this institution.

However, active planning has commenced to assist 20 people to leave during 2007-2008, and an intention to set a new target for 2008-2009. Staff have been appointed to develop transition plans for those residents who are being transitioned into community settings. The Department of Family Services and Housing recently sent 'study' teams to meet with government and community groups in British Columbia, Ontario and Newfoundland and



Manitoba Developmental Centre

Labrador. The 'study' teams were looking at how deinstitutionalization has been accomplished in these three jurisdictions.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission has completed a Stage I review of the complaint on behalf of residents of the MDC. A special investigator will be appointed in December to complete the Stage II work of the investigation. This work will hopefully be completed by March 31, 2008.

ALBERTA



Michener Centre

Very little has changed in Alberta since the last Institution Watch Newsletter. People continue to leave Michener Centre, the largest institution in the province, but at a very slow rate. There have not been any announcements of social policy change that would see the closure of institutions in Alberta although at the senior government level there appears to be a fair amount of interest.

Members of the Alberta Association for Community Living, Executive Committee, met with the Official Opposition, to gain their support should the government decide to implement a decision to close institutions in the province. The closure of institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and Ontario was discussed. AACL emphasized that Alberta needs to continue with the downsizing and closure of its institutions.

The Honourable Greg Melchin, Alberta Minister of Seniors and Community Supports has asked for a meeting in the new year to talk about individualized funding. The Minister stated that he is a supporter of individual funding as a method to empower families in making decisions regarding the types of supports their sons and daughters receive. The opportunity to meet with the Minister provides a venue to talk about deinstitutionalization and other issues facing families and people with developmental disabilities.

SASKATCHEWAN



Valley View Centre

The Deinstitutionalization Coalition of Saskatchewan (DCS) sent an information package to every candidate in the recent provincial election. Parties were asked: if they would state that institutions no longer play a role in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan; what actions they would take to provide individualized supports in the community; and if they would commit to closing Valley View Centre. They also received a copy of the Fall 07 edition of *Institution Watch*. Follow-up was done with each party with personal visits and phone calls, and many candidates requested more information which was provided.

Although there were no official commitments to closing Valley View Centre from the parties, many candidates expressed their support and appreciation for the rights of people with disabilities to live in their own community with the supports they need. All answers were posted on our election blog. The Saskatchewan Party was recently elected with a majority and the DCS looks forward to meeting with them to talk about replacing institutions with adequate, individualized community supports.

YUKON

Yukon has no traditional large institutions designed specifically for persons with intellectual disabilities. There is, however, an extended care facility which houses 6 to 10 children/youth with intellectual disabilities.

NOVA SCOTIA

More than a year ago (November 2006) the Nova Scotia government announced that it would be renovating an empty building to create an institution to house 24 people. The news release estimated the cost to be \$3 million with annual operating costs also estimated to be \$3 million. On December 19, 2007 the tender for construction was awarded at a cost of \$4,180,000. The costs for design work are unknown.



Regional Rehabilitation Centre

QUEBEC

According to the latest data provided by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, on March 31, 2007, 366 people with intellectual disabilities still lived in institutions. However, a community inclusion plan is being implemented for most of these people. The members of the AQIS Board of Directors follow the situation closely.

NEW BRUNSWICK

In the coming weeks, we are anticipating a decision and announcement from the government of New Brunswick about a new disability support program for adults with a disability under age 65. If modeled on the pilot project that has been conducted over the past two years, the new program will provide real opportunities for people to receive individualized funding and supports to live in their communities. In October, NBACL sponsored a 2 day conference on Supported Living that highlighted the values, policies, strategies, and practices that are needed to support people to live in their own homes. NBACL recognizes that many people still reside in residential facilities of various types and sizes. The conference clearly demonstrated that significant changes are needed (and are possible) at many levels to ensure that all people who have an intellectual disability can live in homes of their choosing in the community with the support they require.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



In 2007 the province of Newfoundland and Labrador began work in the development of a new long term care strategy to guide the province's supports and programs for persons with disabilities. Consultants have conducted a literature review of national and international models and best practices and the next phase of developing a framework is underway. Further reports are expected in 2008. In addition, in the October 2007 provincial election Premier Danny Williams' Progressive Conservative Blue Book announced the creation of a Division of Disability. Provincial disability organizations are encouraged by recent developments and announcements and look forward to the opportunity for further dialogue and collaboration with the provincial government.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

There are still a number of mini institutions and large group homes here that need to close and this work continues to be a priority for BCACL. As a first step, we have asked government to implement a "no admissions" policy to the mini institutions but have not yet received this commitment. We hope our partners at both Community Living BC (CLBC) and across government understand the significance of this important step and support our request – it will signal their belief and support of community inclusion for all.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Territorial Government is proceeding with plans to develop a "facility" in Hay River. Plans include three four-bedroom houses and a 'day programming' facility, all on the same site. Both YKACL and People First NWT have written letters to the Minister expressing our concerns. In its letter to the Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, People First NWT states: 'As people labeled with intellectual disabilities, we want to share with you and the people you work with, some very important points to consider when plans are being made to support us.'

Don't make decisions for us. Ask us what we want and need.

We should not have to live anywhere that is described in terms of how many "beds" are in it. That is not a home at all.

We are not clients or patients. We are people.

We should never be "placed" anywhere. We should choose where we live.

We are not "cases" to be "managed".

We have thoughts, opinions, needs, desires and goals. Ask us about them.

We have the right to make decisions about where we live, who we live with and who will provide us with the help we need to live in our communities. Choosing between living in an institution or receiving no support at all is not a choice.

As of the writing of this update, we have not had a response from Minister Lee.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Since the last edition, things remain the same, 126 Islanders with intellectual disabilities remain in institutions across PEI. While there have been positive discussions with government, a requested 'No New Admissions' policy has not yet been confirmed.

On December 14th, 2007, Honourable Doug Currie, Minister of Social Services and Seniors announced the formation of a Disability Services Review Committee. The mandate of the committee is to review the range of services now provided to persons with disabilities, carry out a public consultation process and report findings and recommendations to government. Over the next few weeks, the review committee will develop a discussion paper, with stakeholder and public consultations to be held beginning in February, 2008.



Hillsborough Hospital

NUNAVUT

There are no large institutions designed specifically for persons with intellectual disabilities. People who have returned to Nunavut from institutions are living in group homes. There are still, however, many people living in institutions in the South who have not yet been assisted to move back home.

We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been — a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.

— Skyhawk



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We encourage you to submit stories, Provincial/Territorial updates, pictures and/or personal perspectives on this issue. Please send all contributions directly to Don Gallant at dgallant@nl.rogers.com for publication in our next edition (due out in May, 2008).

Have you signed the Declaration of Support for Community Living?

This Declaration of Support for Community Living can be accessed at
<http://www.institutionwatch.ca/>

Please visit this site and sign our declaration, and the Task Force would ask that you share this site among your various organizations and networks.

WE, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, commit to working together to assist persons to return to their communities and call on all levels of government in this country to:

- Acknowledge that institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities have no place in today's society;
- Stop financing or otherwise supporting the establishment of new institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- Stop all new admissions to existing institutions;
- Support the right of all people with disabilities to live in the community as equal citizens;
- Commit the necessary resources to support the development of quality, comprehensive community-based alternatives to institutional care;
- Acknowledge the wrongs that have been committed against those individuals who have been held for far too long in institutions across this country.

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The opinions and interpretations expressed in the publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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