

# institution watch

PEOPLE  
FIRST  
OF CANADA



PERSONNES  
D'ABORD  
DU CANADA



50 years

Canadian  
Association for  
Community Living

Diversity includes.

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

This is a newsletter written and produced by the People First of Canada CACL Joint Task Force on the Right to Live in Community. For more information, contact Don Gallant at (416) 661-9611 or Shelley Fletcher at (204) 784-7362.

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***"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*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

**Mary Horodyski**

Archivist, Researcher and Writer, Winnipeg



Manitoba has been confining people labelled with an intellectual disability in institutions for 125 years but apart from some experiences publically shared by former institutional survivors such as Scott Klassen, David Weremy or Aime, almost nothing is known by the general public about Manitoba's institutions. In the Spring 2011 issue of *Institution Watch*, Scott Klassen said "Society seems like it doesn't even know the wrong they are doing with institutions. I don't believe it. I think they know."

When I read Scott's statement four years ago, I set out to try to find out what society does know about Manitoba's institutions. The short answer: not a lot – there just isn't a lot of information that is easily available. Even though the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) and Pelican Lake had been (and in the case of MDC still remain) provincially-run institutions only MDC is mentioned on the province's website, and even then its current operation is summed up in 141 words with no explanation of its long history. St. Amant has 554 words on its "History" web page, 319 devoted to the history while the rest describes the current mission. None of the institutions have published official histories. And none of the Manitoba institutions have records that are easily accessible to the general public or to scholarly researchers. Although the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) previously had a museum that was open to the public, this museum was closed several years ago.

Is it true, then, that society doesn't know what is happening in institutions? Or, like Scott says, does the general public just act like they don't know? In my research at the Archives of Manitoba I found a few interesting records that suggest that Scott is right – information about the conditions in Manitoba's institutions has been known. In

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1967, for example, members of the Junior League (a volunteer group of women) toured MDC and St. Amant and wrote a report about what they saw. Their sad conclusion, in the terminology of the time: “Manitoba is merely housing ‘retarded’ people in the easiest, cheapest, way possible.”

While looking through old newspapers, I found an article from 1987 that described how a member of Manitoba’s legislature, Ed Connery, received a letter from a MDC employee that described the institution as a “inhuman hellhole.” When I looked through Hansard (the record of debates in the Manitoba Legislature), I saw that in 1987 Gary Filmon, in his role as an MLA, asked for a copy of an Ombudsman report that he said contained information about the physical abuse of residents, the use of “mind-altering drugs” and other conditions at MDC. I’m not sure if Mr. Filmon ever did receive a copy of the Ombudsman report, but I haven’t been able to locate a copy.

I found other information about MDC in the reports that are written after inquests into a resident death (reports written after 2002 are available on the provincial court’s website). In 2004, the same year that the government announced it was going to give \$40 million to keep MDC open, Dennis Robinson died at MDC. Mr. Robinson, who had been taken on an outing with other people living at the institution, was forgotten in the van when the staff members returned to the institution. Mr. Robinson had a seizure alone in the van and later died. In the inquest report, Provincial Judge Brian Corrin stated he discovered that “it was commonplace” for staff not to follow safety procedures.

It may be true that none of these examples will surprise people who were formerly confined at any of Manitoba’s institutions, but there is still a long way to go before the general public in Manitoba really understands what has happened in our institutions. Some researchers, like Zana Lutfiyya and others, have been researching and publishing in this area for many years. But we also need more researchers to pore through the historical records at the Archives of Manitoba and to also search through newspapers and Hansard. But most importantly, I believe, we need to collect and record the memories and experiences of those people who formerly were confined in MDC, Pelican Lake, and St. Amant. We need to make sure we change what society understands about the history of institutions in Manitoba.

### ***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:

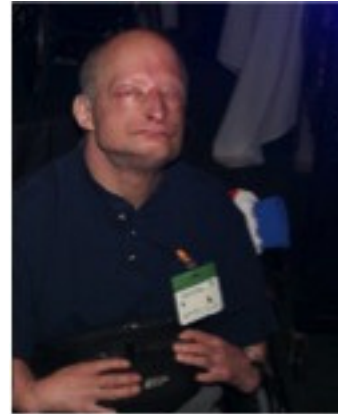
- Acknowledge that institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities have no place in today’s society;
- Stop financing or otherwise supporting the establishment of new institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- Stop all new admissions to existing institutions;
- Support the right 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.

## LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY MEANS EVERYTHING

For years, people with intellectual disabilities have been fighting for the right to live in the community and have been educating others about closing institutions. People First of Canada was founded on this issue by people with intellectual disabilities who lived in institutions and wanted to get out.

"My parents didn't want me to move out of St. Amant," said Scott Klassen, a People First of Manitoba (PFMB) member and former resident of the facility, "My dad was totally against it. But it was the best thing for me – my real life started after I left." Klassen says, "The people at St. Amant were good to me while I was there, but there is no comparison between the life I had in the institution and the life I have here in the community."

"I have a home, a job, friends, a community, I get to help others. And I have the freedom to do what I want," says Klassen. "I am really living my dream life – I wish all people with intellectual disabilities could say the same thing."



*Scott Klassen lived at St. Amant for almost 20 years.*



David Weremy, another PFMB member, echoes Klassen's sentiments. "An institution is no place for anybody to live. You don't really live there – you just are there."

Weremy knows – he spent 18 years as a resident of the Manitoba Developmental Centre. He says, "My family didn't want me to leave, but leaving was the only thing I wanted. Thinking about getting out of there kept me going. I have a great life in the community now." Weremy says, "My family changed their mind about me getting out of there, they know I have a good life."

*David Weremy spent most of his young life at the Manitoba Developmental Centre.*

Institutions should close and everybody should live in the community," he says. David is the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his volunteer work and passionate action in trying to close institutions in Canada. "It never would have happened if I stayed in the institution," he says. "I like my life. I'm doing good work to help people like me get a life in the community."

"We have heard concerns all our lives," says Kristopher Blake, president of PFMB. "Our families fear that we will be put into an institution, they fear that we will be taken out of an institution, and every other fear in between – and that's just about our living situation!"

Blake supports and promotes the United Nations Convention and Article 19 – the Right to Live in Community – and how foundational that article is to people with intellectual disabilities. "It's about rights, it's about citizenship, it's about community, it's about advancing inclusion so that we don't end up where we were before," says Blake. "It wasn't that long ago that people with intellectual disabilities were automatically institutionalized unless the family fought to keep them home. Many people didn't get a choice to live in the community, or the opportunity for an education, or a chance at a job or career, or the possibility of



*Kristopher Blake, president of People First of Manitoba, says everyone deserves a life in the community.*

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relationships beyond staff, carers, or other residents. I'm glad that's not me living in there, but I still feel like institutions are a risk for me because of my disability. I like my life; I wouldn't want to change it."

Labeled with an intellectual disability at a young age, Blake has been a disability rights activist in his home town of Thompson for many years. He is also a student, an avid hockey fan, a son, a partner, a stepdad, a friend, and an active community member. Blake understands the fear of institutionalization from a unique viewpoint, he also understands that living in the community is a fundamental freedom and he is willing to fight for it not only for himself, but also for every other person labeled with an intellectual disability.

Kristopher Blake sums it up simply, "Everybody deserves an opportunity for a life in the community," he says, "Everybody."

## **A WELCOMED AND IMPORTANT MEMBER OF COMMUNITY**

**by Community Living Wallaceburg**

Kirsten Vroom has been a proud resident of Wallaceburg for almost eight years. Prior to her move into Wallaceburg in 2007, Kirsten had lived at the Southwestern Regional Centre (SRC) in Cedar Springs since she was a young girl.

After Kirsten chose to have Community Living Wallaceburg as her service provider, the transition from SRC into the community began. The move involved several months of planning and included plenty of input from Kirsten and her family.



*Hard at work preparing a meal.*

The personal planning facilitator at Community Living Wallaceburg went to SRC to meet Kirsten, spoke with those working with her, and met Kirsten's family in order to find out as much information as possible about Kirsten.

From there, the staff of Community Living Wallaceburg who would be assisting Kirsten were slowly introduced to her and trained in how to provide her appropriate supports.

Prior to Kirsten moving into her new home, she worked with Community Living Wallaceburg staff to ensure the house was everything she required and she visited the house several times before moving in.

Kirsten knew she was going to really enjoy her new home when she was given the opportunity to pick the colour of her new bedroom.

"Kirsten shared a bedroom for years at Southwestern Regional Centre, but since moving into her own home she has her own bedroom and it has a window," said Kirsten's primary support worker Janet Hazzard, "We've learned Kirsten loves the outside, so having a window in her bedroom is great."

The move into her new home was an exciting time because Kirsten knew she was going to be able to share a house with former residents at Southwestern Regional Centre and long time friends; Joyce Gould and Marlene Whittington.



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During the summer months Kirsten often heads into her backyard first thing in the morning. There she can choose to make use of her hammock, enjoy her garden or sit on her patio. Erie Beach is also a favourite summer spot of Kirsten's where she likes to swim in the lake. When the beach isn't an option, Kirsten swims weekly at the Mooretown Pool.

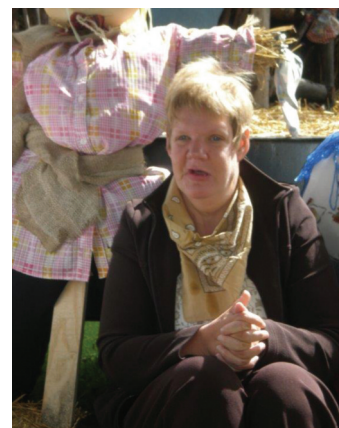
Kirsten is an active member of the Wallaceburg community. She belongs to a craft club, is a member of the Christian Reformed Church, and participates in a bowling league. Loving to socialize, she can also be found at fundraiser dinners at the local Legion or the Moose Lodge.

As a fan of all types of music Kirsten makes weekly trips to both Dresden and Chatham to catch the summer concert series put on in both towns.

Kirsten enjoys figure skating and currently volunteers with the Wallaceburg figure skaters. It's Kirsten's responsibility to hand out treats to the children during their sessions. She always participates in the annual carnival and joins others on the rink to receive the certificates given to all the volunteers.

"She is just a real pleasure to be around because she's always so happy," stated Hazzard, "She's always giggling and clapping."

"Kirsten is quite a lady," Hazzard explained, "She removes her hat to eat and politely folds her hands on her lap at church."



*Kirsten — out and about in her community.*

Kirsten truly enjoys all things feminine. An ideal day for her includes having her hair done, her make-up on, and the right jewelry to finish her look. Kirsten also loves purses and has her own collection which includes purses mailed to her from her sisters.

Kirsten may not use words, but can clearly communicate what she wants through sounds, hand clapping, and actions. For example, if Kirsten is doing her grocery shopping and someone puts something in the cart she doesn't want, it doesn't take long before Kirsten has returned the item to the shelf. Kirsten is also learning sign language. When she goes to her bank she is welcomed by the tellers with a wave and a smile, a gesture that is reciprocated. It is their way of communicating with her and making her feel welcome.

A few years ago Kirsten went to Niagara Falls. It was there she stayed in a hotel for the first time, saw the famous falls and experienced the Butterfly Conservatory.

Kirsten has also ventured to Woodstock, Port Colborne, Vineland and Barrie to visit family members. Each stop along the journey featured a new experience for her including visiting her sister's store, meeting her nephew's new puppy and visiting another sister's horse farm.

Kirsten has support from many of her siblings, including Eric Vroom, her brother who resides in Chatham. "Eric spoils her," laughed support worker, Janet Hazzard, "He takes her out for Chinese, and brings her puzzles." Kirsten's siblings are very supportive of her and since Eric lives the closest to Kirsten he often offers to assist her with doctor appointments and financial decisions.

Being part of a Dutch family, Kirsten remembers her father making Nasi. Thanks to Eric, Kirsten and her staff know how to make the dish and as requested by her, it is enjoyed every Sunday. Once the smell of the familiar entree is in the air, Kirsten will tap her feet or clap her hands in anticipation.

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Other siblings and her stepmother call often, send her letters and gifts in the mail, and email her. When family members come to visit Kirsten they will be greeted at the door with a hug. Kirsten also catches up with her family using Facebook.

Of course Kirsten can be mischievous as she likes to play small tricks on people in order to have fun. If you are sitting with Kirsten and leave the room for something, she may very well have taken your seat before you return. "It's all about having fun with Kirsten," said Hazzard, "She's very playful."

It's been almost eight years since Kristen left the institution to take her place in the community. She still lives with her friends in her own house and with each passing year she has become a more welcomed and important member of her community.

## CONNECTED TO COMMUNITY

by Jim Timlick, Epic Opportunities

It didn't take Rob long to develop a sense of connectedness with his current neighbourhood when he moved there nearly four years ago.

Rob, who has been supported by Epic Opportunities through its Supported Independent Living program since 1987, quickly got to know many of his neighbours during frequent walks with his dog Sox through the west Winnipeg neighbourhood and during visits to an area park.

Today, he is on a first name basis with many of those same neighbours, a number of whom help him with clearing snow and other household chores or just stop to say hello when they see him.

That sense of sociability doesn't come as much of a surprise to people who know Rob. In fact, it's an integral part of who he is, says the manager of Epic's SIL program.

"Rob will remember you after meeting you just one time," says Fran Schulz, who originally got to know Rob as one of his support workers. "He's really sociable and very kind-hearted. He would help anybody out. When we used to go to the bank together he would always open the door for me. He's just a real gentleman."

Rob's current neighbourhood is far different from the one he spent a good portion of his life in. He was placed in the Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage la Prairie at a young age and lived there for about 35 years until moving to Winnipeg. He spent several years living in the city's North End prior to moving into his current home.

When he isn't touring his neighbourhood with Sox, whom he adopted as a pup, Rob can often be found at his local Tim Hortons. He also enjoys spending time with family and is also a regular visitor at the Hope Centre Clinic, where he knows most of the staff by name and will often enjoy a laugh or cup of coffee with them. Rob remains close with his friend Rodney, whom he met when they both lived in Portage and plans to visit him in Gimli next summer.

While Rob enjoys exercising and reading the newspaper, his favourite pastime is watching movies. He has an extensive DVD and VHS movie collection that includes hundreds of titles from superhero films such as *Batman*, *Superman* and *Spiderman* to classic horror flicks like *Frankenstein* and *Halloween*.



*Rob and his dog Sox often explore the community together.*

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Although he may not be quite as agile as your friendly neighbourhood webslinger, Rob is far more mobile today than he was prior to having his right knee replaced about a year and a half ago. Despite some initial discomfort following the surgery, he is now relatively pain-free and has regained much of his mobility.

Rob has extensive experience working in the restaurant industry including stints as an attendant at Robin's, Coffee Time, McDonald's and Burger King. He also worked as a janitor at Keystone Christian School.

## **A BELOVED BROTHER — ROBERT JOHN CROMBIE**

**By Elaine Yost, with thanks from Barb Crombie**

On March 11, 2013, the Government of Alberta announced that the Michener Centre in Red Deer, Alberta, an institutional environment for individuals with disabilities, was going to be closed. This sent many families into a "tizzy" and caused a great deal of anxiousness and uncertainty. The "promise" had been made by former governments that it would always be there for them, and individuals could remain there for the rest of their lives. While a number of families supported the change and the possibility of other alternatives, there were many who felt that government had reneged on a commitment. They strongly and vocally believed there were no alternatives that could provide the kind of support they believed was required or being received.

One very courageous and determined sister was informed of the decision and began a journey of exploring what alternatives there might be for her brother who had moved into Michener at the age of 4 and lived there for 60 years. Five years prior to the formal announcement of the decision to close the institution, her brother had been moved overnight to a different home. He began to experience severe teasing and bullying and also a number of significant health issues. His daily self-abuse was increasing. His sister made valiant attempts to have him placed in a more suitable home within Michener but administration refused to affect a change.

As the internal knowledge of the decision to depopulate the institution became more evident, many staff chose to leave and consequently the remaining staff had to manage without a full staffing complement. Communication was very difficult and the ability to actually know what was happening for and to her brother was very unclear. She was continually adamant when talking with administration that her brother continue to live within the Michener community, it had been his community for 60 of his 64 years. She was offered a placement in Edmonton, southern Alberta, Red Deer city and finally, Calgary, the city of his birth.

After meeting with a number of agencies she made the decision to have him moved out of Michener to Calgary. While still filled with uncertainty and concern about the consequences of her decision – whether it was the right thing to do or not – the planning got underway for a move. Information was exchanged between Michener and the agency she had selected. The response of the agency to the information that was shared was not at all what she expected. It was immediately clear the desire to know him first, as a person, was what would drive all the decisions, current and future. The spectre of her fear, the lack of trust garnered over the last 5 years, was still evident but the hope of a happier future for her dear brother became clearer.

Some notes the new agency received about him state : "he cycles from drooling and listing to one side and barely able to talk or verbally respond", " ....nearly off the side of the chair drooling at the mouth", "there is some difference of opinion as to whether the Olanzapine is beneficial or not but the consensus seems to be that it may be helping to make him less confrontational", "I never had any idea of the emotional consequences of moving from Cedar to Terrace....". Many "outbursts occurred which were very difficult to watch". "Staff reported feeling "helpless" and questioned the "extremely adverse effects it (self-abuse) has

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on his physical health". His sister found that for most of the day he would sit idly in the living room, where no conversation occurred, to accompanied walking 400 meters to the recreation centre for a pop.

In April 2014 the staff from the new agency visited Michener to learn more about his needs and learn about some of his unique characteristics – what he liked; what he didn't like; what brought him happiness, joy and meaningfulness; who were the important people in his life; what he liked to eat or not; what his routine usually was. It appeared to the new agency that while there was a desire by the Michener staff to provide a level of care that was "professional, nurturing and empathic" it was very difficult for them to achieve.

On May 14th, 2014 the move took place, his dedicated sister by his side. The Residential Director promised him "we will listen to you and we are here for you". It was so important that a relationship of trust be developed and his fear replaced with a certainty that what he was told would be what would happen. He would have choices, he could say "no" and it would be respected. He would be asked what he wanted, what he wanted to do, and he could be empowered to direct his own life with support provided by people who believed in his capacity and his human needs first. The response to his self-abuse would be measured and he would soon learn that there were other ways of letting people know what he wanted or not.



His new home in Calgary where he now lives with two roommates, offers many new opportunities, friendships and an untold sense of security. It is obvious from his demeanour, relaxed body and interaction with staff and visitors that not only is he a valued member of this home but he is loved and respected for who he is. He has gained weight, eats slowly now while thoroughly enjoying his food. He is known at the local coffee shop near his house, rides in a car and no longer tries to open car doors when out for a drive. He participates in cooking, loves his bath and now, is happy to be transferred in a sling. Activities include enjoying magazines and family photos with staff, going to the Farmer's Market, visiting with family and new friends, BBQ's and parties, skyping with his sister. He looks to his caregivers as friends, greeting them in the morning with openness and trust. The need for medication has disappeared and very little agitation or discomfort is apparent. His boots and his watch, his family photos are still very important to him but he knows they will always be available to him and he does not need to fear they will disappear.

Approximately nine months after his move, he was hospitalized for a bowel issue. It was learned that he had been having a number of problems in this area since a surgery in 2011. It had been previously noted that he frequently asked to go to the bathroom but often would not go. While in the hospital, the issue seemed to resolve itself and he returned to his home. About six months later, he again needed to be hospitalized for the same issue. This time he passed a glove that a staff member noted "may have been there a long time". Many questions arose from this. Might this intrusive object explain his "behavior" and why he was doing what he could to let people know something was wrong? Was he really only trying to communicate a problem and much of what was being interpreted as negative behavior was due to discomfort and pain?

There are many lessons and new awareness that have resulted from this man's journey. His journey has impacted everyone who has been involved. From the staff perspective, learning that the negative information they received about him and the fear it created was entirely misplaced; trusting in their humanity and the purposefulness of their work and believing in their capacity to assist a person through challenging experiences; that respect and really listening are very important windows to a person's soul; and that this is the most rewarding and fulfilling aspect of support.





For his sister, this is the story of a beloved brother's return to Community, in the true sense it was, and is, meant to be. It began with his birth into a loving family and subsequent debilitating illness; a time when choices were very limited and there was little if any support for families or for their children. The choices many families were forced to make, the attitudes that prevailed and the decisions made at the time impacted the entire family but most profoundly the person decisions were, and continue to be, made about. With parents gone and another sibling's recent death, the responsibility for decisions and new choices for an unknown future weighed heavily on a sister who adores this brother. The "old" system had been impossible to navigate openly and with trust; the new agency quickly dispelled fears, were compassionate, fierce in their loyalty to each unique individual, listened and responded. This wonderful, caring and committed sister says "I am so very, very grateful for the team that now surrounds him, full of love, gentle care and great compassion. He is showing a huge change in personality, a return to who he was, full of life. Landed, cradled at last into a Community of exuberance, laughter, tenderness and joy; a family." The wonderful, caring and committed staff say, "We too are very grateful to be given the opportunity to be our best selves."

## UPDATE ON VALLEY VIEW CENTRE

The Saskatchewan Association for Community Living's (SACL) number one priority is the Valley View Centre (VVC) Transition. The SACL was invited to be a partner to the transition planning in February 2012, and continues to be a key support and leader to this process. Valley View Centre (VVC) in Moose Jaw continues to transition to the closure of the facility in 2018. The Transition Steering Committee – made up of the Ministry of Social Services Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD), the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL), and the Valley View Centre Family Group (VVCFG) – is guiding the transition and leading the development of resources and supports for the individuals and their families as they leave Valley View and move out into the community. As well, the CLSD Community Services Unit and the SACL Community Inclusion Consultants are working closely with families and the staff at VVC on the transition plans for each of the 158 individuals who live at VVC today.



*Valley View Centre*

The Government of Saskatchewan's acceptance of the 14 recommendations developed by the VVC Transition Steering Committee have been used to improve service delivery, and ensure that each individual participates in and receives a person-centred plan that will guide their transition to a community of their choice. The recommendations have further led to an expansion of the provincial safety net including crisis supports and outreach services to the community. This safety net will protect individuals with intellectual disabilities who at times are not supported effectively. The VVC Transition is thus creating supports not only for individuals living at VVC, but also for individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout the province.

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To date, the transition team has successfully moved 21 individuals to homes in the community; with the support of Inclusion BC one individual has moved to British Columbia and the remaining 20 people have moved to homes in communities of their choosing across Saskatchewan. Many existing community based service providers have welcomed people transitioning out of VVC into their homes and services and there is ongoing development of new resources to support the transition. As more new homes and services open their doors, we anticipate that there will be a constant ongoing transition of people out of the centre into new homes.

Homes are being looked at and considered across the entire spectrum of housing options. Group Homes, Group Living, Independent Living, and Approved Private Service Homes will be the primary forms of housing, with long-term care being considered, and used, where it is an appropriate model to support the age related needs of individuals.

Individuals are being given the opportunity to meet with and learn about existing service providers. Individuals and their families are able to choose their preferred model and location, which matches their person-centred plan.

There are approximately 17 homes in development (new purchases or builds) and a number of agreements underway with existing service providers. Homes are being developed with no more than 4 individuals living together. The entire service delivery system is moving to a model that prefers/supports a maximum of 4 individuals in typical homes. Who the individual lives with is based on person-centred planning, existing friendships and personal preference.

Individuals are moving to the community of their choice. The individual, his or her family, and person-centred planning are determining which community the individual will move to. There has been a shift and more people are leaving Moose Jaw to be closer to family and natural support networks. Individuals will be moving to Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Yorkton, Estevan, Swift Current, and several other towns and communities in the province. To date, 4 individuals plan to move outside of the province.

The SACL's Community Inclusion Consultants (CIC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Service's Community Service Workers (CSW), and Community Intervention Worker (CIW), have hosted regular meetings and activities for the individuals of VVC to provide them with a forum to discuss the transition. Individuals involved have expressed hopes, fears, dreams and concerns about the transition. The CICs, CSWs and the CIW are working together to provide opportunities to improve daily living skills through community outings, guest speakers, and classes. These opportunities have included cooking and kitchen safety classes, relationship boundary classes, and having a member of the Moose Jaw Police Service speak about safety in the community.

The Power of Inclusion campaign was launched to raise awareness and inspire the public. SACL Communications Manager, Travis Neufeld produced three short videos that premiered in Moose Jaw at the Power of Inclusion Art and Craft Show. The three videos each highlight one specific aspect of the Power of Inclusion; the first being Emmy Barr, a local Moose Jaw Celebrity and the Queen of Caramel, the second follow Jack, Eric and David on a night on the town, and the third highlights the Moose Jaw Moxie Club. The videos aired in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Regina at the Cineplex, as well as on local television channels throughout the summer. To learn more visit [www.inclusionispower.com](http://www.inclusionispower.com).

## ST. AMANT CENTRE

In 2013, St. Amant launched its goal of transitioning 15 people a year for 5 years. Last year we were very successful in moving 15 people, some to foster care and some to community homes. Overall these transitions have been a huge success, with the individuals who moved enjoying their new living situation and family members being pleased with the transition process and the outcome.

Now in the second year of the plan, St. Amant is working with another 15 individuals and their families to prepare for transition. The transition process is very involved and St. Amant has made a commitment to ensure a successful transition for each person leaving River Road Place.



*St. Amant Centre, Winnipeg*

We know that community works, because we've been supporting people in community homes for over 35 years. We are excited to finally have a commitment from our funder to move people who do not require 24 hour medical care to community living and are eager to meet our goal. Part of our plan includes changing our designation from a developmental centre to a health care centre where the criteria for admission will be based on the need for 24 hour medical requirements. As the organization evolves, we are also looking forward to meeting some gaps in the community in the areas of respite and crisis stabilization.

Another exciting change that we are working on, is the development of a community clinic staffed by medical professionals who have expertise in supporting people with intellectual disabilities. Research shows that people labelled with intellectual disabilities receive sub-standard health care and we know that the quality of our healthcare is vital to our quality of life.

This clinic will also serve as a training ground for medical and nursing students through a partnership with the University of Manitoba. Educating new medical professionals will increase the capacity of our community to deliver informed, quality care to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

We know that change is hard, and we are committed to walking through this process with families and providing as much support as we can through the transitions. Our mission and our values are not changing, we are as committed as ever to providing support in an environment of collaboration, hospitality, excellence and respect and to meeting the greatest needs in our community.

### 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](mailto:dgallant@nl.rogers.com) for publication in our next edition.



## QUESTIONS FOR READERS

The PFC/CACL Task Force is circulating the following two questions. We would like to get responses from across this country and from as many people as possible; individuals with intellectual disabilities, families, caregivers, neighbours, teachers, service providers – indeed anyone who would like to share their perspective on this issue.

**Question 1: Why do you think people are still being placed in institutions, nursing homes and other long term care facilities rather than having more appropriate supports found for them in their community?**

**Question 2: Many people with similar needs as those above are living much better lives in the community. What do you think are the reasons they are staying and living in the community? What are the reasons they are not being sent to institutions?**

While the PFC/CACL Task Force on the Right to Live in Community is encouraged that there are only three of the largest institutions left in Canada (one in the process of closing) we grow increasingly concerned about other trends we see developing.

More and more, individuals with intellectual disabilities are being placed in nursing homes; seniors' homes and other long term care facilities around the country. More and more, there are calls to build 'new, modern institutions'. More and more, congregate settings are being developed and funded and referred to as 'innovative'.

As important as it is to see the large facilities closed once and for all in this country it is equally important to ensure that other forms, or newer forms, of segregated congregate care are not developed. We need to address the root causes that exist in our communities that cause institutional care to still be considered an option.

We would encourage you to take the time to consider these questions and send your responses prior to November 30, 2015 to:

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**THANK YOU.**



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