Southern Alberta Community Living Association

STAFF STAR

MARCH 2009

Sue's Brew

Several years ago, it was my good fortune to be introduced to Mr. Paul Fujishge, Executive Director of Transitions in St. Albert. Paul and I immediately realized that we were kindred spirits who believed strongly in the potential of people and their ability to live full and rewarding lives. We have spent many hours discussing how we might support staff and individuals in different and non-traditional ways that could result in more positive outcomes for everyone concerned. In December we were approached by the Alberta Council of Disability Services and asked to present at their Spring Conference *"FROM INPUT TO IMPACT...CELEBRATE THE MOMENTUM".*

Paul and I have agreed to do so and have chosen ***SUPPORT WITH A TWIST*** as the theme for our presentation.

The following message from Paul is taken from the most recent edition of the Transitions Newsletter.

YES WE CAN!

"We must build a world free of unnecessary barriers, stereotypes, and discrimination.... policies must be developed, attitudes must be shaped, and buildings and organizations must be designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to get the education they need and live independently as full citizens in their communities." *-- Barack Obama*

If anyone is an example of overcoming barriers in challenging times, it is Barack Obama. His words and his life are a beacon of hope to all of us.

Thirty years in the disability services sector have shown me that progress can be slow and painstaking. Despite the simplicity of a vision of full inclusion, all kinds of complications and challenges keep the vision beyond many people's reach. Is it too much to believe that a person with a disability can lead a full life similar to you and me?

Barack's example tells us the answer: **Yes We Can**!

There is no road map to inclusion that can be picked up at the corner store. Each person's circumstance and experience is unique. However, there are people traveling the road to inclusion and their journeys give us guideposts to learn and benefit from, if we are prepared to listen. At this time of budget constraints and economic uncertainties, these lessons are absolutely essential.

So what are people's journeys telling us? What does a truly person centered approach lead to? There are many dimensions.

One of the biggest areas is around personal control. As we respect people's rights to self-determination, they begin to take charge of their own lives. This is at times challenging when we can see the potential consequences of some decisions. However, these are important stepping stones that we all need to go through to lead richer and ultimately safer lifestyles.

A second area is self-confidence. As people realize they have more say in their own lives they start to blossom and develop greater self-help skills. As confidence grows, people take greater pride in their own abilities and desire even more independence.

A third area is that relationships with staff start to change and become more like a partnership. Staff become a source of support balanced appropriately with other aspects of life. All of us require professional assistance at times but not to the extent that it dominates or controls our lives.

A fourth area is relationship building. Exploring personal interests within the larger community and gaining increased employment experience provides opportunity for more relationships. Staff can play a significant role in increasing a person's "social capital."

Finally, the above four areas begin to change the community's perception and interaction with people with developmental disabilities. The perception starts to become one where diversity is appreciated and that people are viewed with assets and dignity rather than deficits and charity.

When all these areas start to come together, the potential to achieve a full life becomes a real possibility.

Certainly people with disabilities face other major challenges and barriers. Adequate income and affordable housing are two that come to mind. However, our experience is that growth on an individual level is where it all starts and we believe that greater societal change will only be possible with the active participation and direction of self-advocates.

A final thought about other stakeholders: Whether we represent staff, parents/guardians, family members or advocacy organizations, we need to work together so people have the best possible chance to succeed. This means sincerely hearing, respecting and incorporating each of our points of view. Ultimately, though we have to remember we each only represent a piece of the total picture. It is the individual him/herself who we must defer to and be guided by. This is vitally important for us to keep in mind if meaningful change is to occur.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH : CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1 pound baby carrots
- 3 cups water
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 (3 pound) corned beef brisket with spice packet, cut in half
- 1 small head cabbage, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS (4 to 6 servings)

Place the onion, potatoes and carrots in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Combine water, garlic, bay leaf, sugar, vinegar, pepper and contents of spice packet; pour over vegetables. Top with brisket and cabbage. Cover and cook on low for 8-9 hours or until meat and vegetables are tender. Remove bay leaf before serving.

THE MORE YOU STAY
THE MORE YOU PLAY!

Monthly draw - March 2009

HBC (Zellers/Bay)	Nicole Vallet
The Keg	Kasha Zychewicz
Zephyr's	Peter Rempel
Enmax/Yates	Cassandra Parent
Chapters/Galazy Theatre	Lillian Westling
Le Mezza Luna/Chapters	Maria Elliot
Canadian Tire	Melissa Luthje
Country Blooms	Allison Pike
Ric's Grill	Michael O'Brien
Home Depot	Liz Gibboney

Notes From Accounting:

- All T4's have now been mailed out
- March 2nd is the cut off date for RRSP contributions for the 2008 tax year. You should be receiving the T4RSP from Sun Life by the middle of March for the January & February RRSP contributions
- Tax changes proposed in the last federal budget will be effective April 1, 2009, retroactive to January 1, 2009. The basic personal amount (for the Federal Income Tax) has increased from $10,100 to $10,320
- Manulife is upgrading all their previous Aetna/Maritime policies to their new systems. The change will be effective April 1, 2009 for our plan. Watch for more information coming the middle of March

Congratulations Lorna Bair!!

On February 21, 2009 Lorna celebrated her 60th birthday at the New Dynasty restaurant with family and friends.

Although Lorna did not qualify for the Canadian Ski Jumping Team, she will be cheering the team on.

Lorna likes to talk to the telemarketers, but they never seem to call twice!

Happy Birthday Lorna from all the Staff at SACLA.

HEALTH & WELLNESS presents:

SPRING CLEANING THE SAFE WAY

Chores like re-organizing closets and tackling a thorough spring cleaning can put families at even greater risks for falls and poisonings. Keep safe practices on the top of your mind while cleaning up and cleaning out your home, garage and yard.

- Always keep stairs, steps, landings and all floors clear of toys and clutter.
- When cleaning walls and ceilings, use the opportunity to replace burned out light bulbs with bright lights over stairs and steps.
- Carry loads you can see over, and keep one hand free to hold banisters and railings.
- Safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.
- Keep children away from anyone cleaning windows. Shut upper windows and promptly replace any removed window guards.
- When washing window blinds, check that cords are stored up high, out of a child's reach.
- If you need to climb, always use a ladder.
- When using a ladder, stand at or below the highest safe standing level. For a stepladder, the safe standing level is the second rung from the top, and for an extension ladder, it's the fourth rung from the top.
- Before using a ladder, make sure the rungs are dry and the ladder is securely positioned on a flat surface.
- Follow product label safety recommendations, like wearing gloves and masks, when using harsh products.
- Do not mix household cleaning products together because their contents could react with dangerous results.
- Carefully read the labels on all products and medications and separate those that say "Caution," "Warning," "Danger" or "Poison." Lock these products up and out of sight and reach of young children.
- Empty buckets after use. Store them upside down.