



Connections Counselling & Consulting Foundation

Agency Directors Message

It's been just over a year now since phrases such as "the downturn in the economy", "recession", "economic challenges" and "social/economic hardships", became a regular part of our conversation. While there have been glimmers of a turn around, it is of course premature to say the crisis is behind us. At a recent workshop related to fund development, the statement was made that for the first time in Canadian history, overall giving to charities is down by 3%. This might not seem like much, however it does have a large impact for charities/non-profit organizations.

Connections' fund development plan has felt the impact of this during 2009, and this sentiment is being echoed by other not for profits. This, coupled with recent announcements of provincial government budget constraints and cutbacks, will continue to have a significant effect on our agency and the work we do. The management and our board are being prudent with decisions made and are ever mindful of the challenges and opportunities that influence our day to day operations. What we do know is the

need and demand for our services has continued to increase during this year, especially for the counseling program. What we hope for as we look ahead is that major decisions such as program or staffing cuts do not become a reality. Our fund development coordinator, Jessilyn Yuhas, has been diligent in her efforts of broadening our funding base, scouting out 3rd party fundraising opportunities and looking ahead to a special event to celebrate our 20th anniversary next year.

Having just celebrated Thanksgiving this past weekend, despite these realities, we do indeed have much to be thankful for and will move forward. I truly am grateful for the staff, board members and volunteers whose commitment to Connections is evident in all they do and whose common goal is to provide quality supports and services to ensure people with disabilities can realize their goals and improve their circumstances. I'm also thankful for the ongoing support from Friends of Connections - individuals, corporations, funders, and businesses, who despite the economic times, continue

to realize the value of their investment in the work we do. I'd particularly like to acknowledge Bentall Real Estate for their support, enabling us to be a visible presence at their Stampede functions and raise some funds through a variety of activities. Bentall is also supporting a funding raising event which will occur at the end of October at Livingstone Place (check out the information in this newsletter).

Over the next few months in addition to budgeting and strategic planning for 2010, our focus will turn towards holiday activities for our client families. We have always been grateful for the community's generosity to ensure Christmas is a special time for our clients and are certain that our supporters will continue to share their holiday spirit this year. Here is looking back on a year that was challenging but also humbling, stressful but strength building, difficult to handle but also excellent at showing us all what is most important; and here is to the beginning of a new year, with hopes for abounding kindness, community caring and renewed prosperity.

"For the first time in Canadian history overall charitable giving is projected to be down 3% in 2009."

Board of Directors

Daryl Pamplin—Past President

Peter Cheung- President

Gavin Preston - Treasurer

Gurbeer Singh Gill - Secretary

Kimberly Humphreys - Director

Susan Plesuk- Director

Michelle Wolf—Director

Directorial Staff

Pat Morris -Agency Director

Lauren Raymore - Program Director

Pat Morris
Agency Director

Fall 2009

Bentall Real Estate a “Real” Connections Supporter

Connections would once again like to extend our sincere thanks to Bentall Real Estate for their commitment to helping Connections serve our growing number of clients. In July,

Bentall helped Connections raise over \$2500 through our participation in three of their stampede events where we conducted 50/50 draws and a duck pond for great prizes. A special thanks goes out to Art Skow, Reta Labiuk, Anita Ferland and Courtney of the Bentall team for all of their work in making these events a success.

We also appreciate the hospitality and kindness of the many Bentall employees who partook in our draws and games and who encouraged their coworkers to do the same.

In addition we would like to extend a sincere thank you to volunteer Andrew Pollock for his help at these events, and to the board members who braved the chilly temperatures to sell 50/50 tickets.



Connections News

Making a Difference Just by Getting a Massage

Feeling a little stressed? Why not accomplish great things just by getting a massage and shopping?

That's exactly what those who come down to the +15 level of the west tower of Livingstone place on October 29th will get to do. From 9am– 3pm four registered massage therapists will provide 15 minute chair massages for a donation of \$20. In addition we will be hosting a silent auction with prize packages that aid in relaxation and rejuvenation. This is a great opportunity to support Connections while giving yourself some much needed TLC as the hectic holiday season approaches.

All proceeds of the event will go toward continuity of service for our counselling, in-home support and workshop programs. Connections would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of the participating massage therapists for donating their time, in particular Kelly for proposing this idea and making it a reality



Trade This
For This



Staff Profile : Lauren Raymore –Program Director

Lauren Raymore is one of the founding members of Connections, currently serves as Program Director, and is integral in mentoring and guiding all of our front-line staff as well as undertaking front line work herself. Lauren has an engaging, interesting and comforting presence, and a special talent for making all who encounter her, be it clients or staff, feel at home. It is apparent that Lauren's has passed down her belief in social justice and volunteering to her three children, as they have all been engaged in making our endeavors at Connections a success as well as supporting other community organizations. Lauren is a true ambassador for our cause, and a dedicated leader, not to mention a woman with a passion for fashion and a heart for art. In 2010, Lauren plans to be actively involved in sharing her expertise and experiences as she presents at colleges and conferences in Alberta and beyond.



Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch Camp—a Family Favorite

On the August long weekend, Connections hosted it's 3rd annual Family Camp at the Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch.

At camp this year families made lasting memories and bonded with peers as they camped out in teepees, enjoyed canoeing, swimming, hiking, horseback riding and an obstacle course. The children expelled some of their excited energy on the nearby playground and parents got a chance to chat with peers and make new friends.

As always participants left tired but happy, and with many new stories to share.



Community Spirit and You: Giving Circles a Great Way to Support Connections

Giving circles have quickly been gaining popularity as a way for individuals to continue to have a big impact with their charitable donations while also watching their spending. **Giving Circles** are a form of philanthropy consisting of groups of individuals or couples who pool their funds and other resources to donate to their communities. Giving circles range from large organizations with formal leadership, to small groups of friend that host dinners or parties “with a cause” where every attendee donates a small amount of money to be pooled and donated to a chosen cause.



“ Small donations from individuals when added together through a giving circle and then doubled by a matching program like Community Spirit can have an incredible impact on those in need , especially when donated to a program delivery focused group like Connections.”

-Jessilyn Yuhas,

We at Connections see giving circles as an excellent way to financially support the organization, share your reasons for your interest in Connections and engage with likeminded friends. We have hosted giving circles ourselves and encourage Connections supporters to do the same, as these donations can have a large impact on our client families.

And right now, your giving circle donation can go even further toward achieving our mission thanks to the Community Spirit Matching Program, which matches individual (or giving circle) donations up to a maximum of \$25, 000. This means that a \$20 donation on your part, for example, would provide \$40 worth of support for our organization, and when partnered with five friends doing the same would mean \$ 200 toward our programs.

For more information on setting up a giving circle visit www.givingcircles.org

Our 20th Anniversary—A Time to reflect and Renew

Preparations continue for our 20th Anniversary Celebrations, with plans for a gala event, performance and silent auction, participation in a number of fundraising events, and a carnival celebration for our clients.

Connections is also looking at our 20th Anniversary as a time to reflect on the our past service and then consider the work we can do going forward to create a future where people with intellectual disabilities are seen as valued members of their families and communities.

Please check our website often for information on 20th anniversary events and celebrations, and ways you can help to make out 20th anniversary efforts a success.

In appreciation

To realize our vision we rely on the generous support of our funders, community groups, schools, service clubs, foundations, and individuals who give of their time, money and talents.

A special thanks to Jim Maloney & Laurie Dodds, and Jan McInnis for their generosity and continued support of Connections.

Our Vision

For people with intellectual disabilities to be accepted as valued members of their families and communities.

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of our **Individual Donors, Donors Choice supporters & Volunteers** without whom Connections could not continue the work we do, including, **Morguard Investments Limited**, Winnipeg who donated an honourarium for a former Connections' board member through Canada helps; **BMO Employee Charitable Foundation**; **ConocoPhillips Canada**; **Harry & Martha Cohen Foundation**; **N. Murray Edwards Foundation**

Partnering Agencies



Our Funders



United Way
of Calgary and Area



social venture partners
CALGARY



As well as Region 3 Calgary and area, Child and Family Services, United Way Donor's choice and Persons With Developmental Disabilities

Our Mission

Empowering individuals by providing:

1. Ongoing education, programs and advocacy
2. Ongoing family support to parents with an intellectual disability and their children
1. Counselling to persons with an intellectual disability, their families and caregivers

Show Your Support Donate Now (Mail to address below)

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 www.canadahelps.org