

# Moving with Stride

## enVision's Residential Tea – Creating Connection within our Community

ENVISION NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2022



enVision  
community living

# Community Connection

enVision Community Living is a non-profit community-based organization committed to delivering supports and services that provide people who live with an intellectual disability opportunities for personal growth and development, and opportunities to live the life of their choosing in the community.



# The Director's Message

Recently the Chamber of Commerce recognized enVision Community Living for being a Chamber member for 25 years. When we became a member of the Chamber, it was innovative to see ourselves as having a legitimate role to play in the local business community. It was one of the early steps in moving enVision from an only charitable service, to an essential part of our local economy.

**“When we became a member of the Chamber, it was innovative to see ourselves as having a legitimate role to play in the local business community.”**

Like so many other non-profits and charities, enVision's impact goes beyond simply providing a service for people who are at a disadvantage. We help people to gain skills and independence, becoming increasingly self-sufficient, with less reliance on the service sector. We help people to get connected to work, recreational, and social opportunities. We help people to connect with others by building bridges to show commonality. We also help people to fulfill their purpose in making a difference in the lives of others. Although we open the doors to opportunities and find ways to help people we serve navigate barriers, our success is also attributed to the determination and will of the people we serve. Often, people just need someone to walk alongside, encourage, and help them see what is possible, in order to overcome barriers to being fully included in society.

enVision believes that everyone is deserving of a good life and equal opportunity. We work to increase people's access to equality and inclusion so that true value can be experienced. What we do, is not an act of charity, it is an act of building up one's self-worth and giving dignity and respect to people, no matter their circumstance.

**“enVision believes that everyone is deserving of a good life and equal opportunity.”**

In this newsletter you will read the story of how our Stride program is giving young adults early opportunities to be contributing citizens, to follow their dreams, and achieve their goals. There was no Stride program 25 years ago. At that time, young adults with a disability needed to stay in school until age 21, and then they were able to receive services



*Jeannette DeLong*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

through traditional Day Services. The Stride program came about because enVision responded to the expressed needs of young adults who wanted to graduate with their friends and leave school at age 18 rather than at age 21.

enVision also continues to provide some of the same supports and services as we did 25 years ago. In this newsletter, you will also read about the impact of relationships, and social connections that happen through our Residential Tea. This Residential tea has become a tradition at enVision for over 25 years. An event where connections and bonds are strengthened, and value and understanding is exemplified.

The government's recent announcement on a funding increase for wages is bittersweet, considering that it was also almost 25 years ago that the disability sector actively began to work with the province on addressing a staffing crisis. A Staffing Stabilization Initiative kicked off in 2000, with the very first steps to compensate staff adequately for their responsibilities. Sadly, steps toward this goal stopped abruptly after 2003, as the priority of services took a back seat with government. We are grateful to see the investment made by the province in 2022, but if the last two decades are any indication of the persistence required to keep this issue alive, then our work is still cut out for us to reach the goal of fair compensation.

A lot has been achieved in the last 25 years. What is even clearer to us now is that connections and relationships with others are really the most important. The isolation, distancing, and lack of physical contact during the pandemic was a big change for all of us. Many of us have narrowed our circle of friends and relationships, keeping only those that are the most meaningful. Yet, we will need to begin to expand our networks again. We need to rediscover the joy of getting to know people and learning which interests of others we have in common. It will be important for us to create welcoming spaces, make room for those who are too often left out.



# **We're Hiring**

- **Job Coaches**
- **Employment Facilitators**
- **Direct Support Professionals**
- **Coordinators**
- **Managers**

**We offer a competitive salary and  
benefits**

**Extended Healthcare with Vision & Dental  
Pension Plan**

**Long Term Disability**

**Short Term Disability**

**Professional Development**

**Employment Assistance Program**

**Vacation Days**

**Paid Sick Days**



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# Creating Connection within our Community

December 12, 2021 was a beautiful and sunny Sunday – one of those perfect southern Manitoba winter days. We were excited to be holding the annual, and beloved, enVision Residential Christmas Tea after a one-year break due to the pandemic. It was not possible for this event to be like teas of the past because of COVID-19 restrictions. We were, however, determined to hold an event that would replicate the atmosphere and spirit of past teas: warmth, joy, celebration, and friendship.

The history of the Residential Christmas Tea dates back more than 25 years. I'm told it started off as a tea with dainties, tea, and coffee served. The event evolved over the years to renting facilities large enough to accommodate our ever-growing number of attendees and to hiring a caterer for the "Faspa",

which is a Low German word for a light afternoon lunch.

In recent years, folks living in enVision staffed residences, Supported Independent Living, and Home Share were given two free tickets to invite their own guests, with opportunity for more tickets to be purchased. People supported and their staff were gifted free admission to the event. The event was always abuzz with people greeting and visiting with each other. It was a wonderful afternoon of people connecting with old friends and acquaintances (some they'd known for 60 plus years) as well as meeting new people. In addition to food and fellowship, past teas always offered some form of entertainment such as the enVision choir singing, or outside musicians performing.





*Judy Neufeld*  
COORDINATOR

One can imagine the tall order it was of recreating the experience during a pandemic with ever-changing restrictions. It was not too daunting, however, for the committee who volunteered to make it happen. The committee consisted of Janice Munro, Susan Carr, Cristina Santos, and Judy Neufeld, with volunteered help from Lynette Penner, Darcen Brandt, Cheryl Janz, Loretta Wiebe, Ryleigh Munro, and Karen Penner.

This year we hosted a drive-up tea in the parking lot of the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. As 55 people arrived in vehicles, they were warmly greeted by the committee, and each person was given an individual Faspa meal-to-go that had been prepared by MJ's Cafe. A photo book of current pictures of friends in residential locations had been assembled and each person was given their own copy. The

photos were as funny or serious as each person chose.

Participants were invited to park their vehicle and enjoy the heartwarming musical talents of Steinbach's very own award-winning Elvis Impersonator, Corny Rempel, who sang Christmas carols. Except for short breaks between sets, Elvis kept singing until everyone enjoyed a full performance. As it turns out, Elvis performs equally well in outdoor winter clothing as he does in his white jumpsuit with the plunging neckline! People loved the show he put on, especially 'Blue Christmas'!

It had been almost two years since many folks had seen each other. Greetings and well wishes were shared at a safe distance. Even though people couldn't greet each other physically, or share the experience with guests, that afternoon we felt the excitement and joy of the season, and warmth of friendship.

# The Disability Services Sector is Facing a Hiring Crisis

## The Crisis

enVision Community Living is in a significant staffing crisis. While this crisis has been at play for over two decades across the disability sector, the pandemic of the past two years has further driven our staffing vacancies to levels never seen before. We have always felt the pressure of vacant positions because of the impact it has on services. With funding rates only covering the basic staffing levels, our 5% historical vacancy rate has always been a challenge to manage. During the pandemic our staffing vacancies have risen sharply to over 17% in Residential Services, and up to 60% in Day Services. This has culminated into about 85 vacant positions today.

An ever-present challenge is that funding levels for staff wages have never matched the level of responsibility that our staff are required to fulfill. Our staff support people to be connected to community, find jobs and ways to contribute. They also look after personal care needs, administer medications, and look after physiotherapy and other health matters, just to name a few of their responsibilities. During COVID staff have taken on even greater responsibility to protect the health of people we support; diligently wearing PPE that was never required in the past, completing screening and cleaning protocols, and drawing on all creative initiatives to help people we support to flourish despite all the limitations that the pandemic brings.

enVision staff have undergone extensive training for their roles. Some bring with them three- or four-year university undergraduate degrees, or diplomas from Red River College Polytech, specializing in Disability and Community Support, while others come to us with no prior related education. We provide extensive in-house training which is required of all new staff before they are allowed to work with people enVision serves. This training includes: health and safety measures, Manitoba accessibility standards, occupational health and safety awareness, abuse prevention, hazardous materials, standard HR practises, in addition to classes in lift and transfers, the Vulnerable Persons Act, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, and positive behaviour supports.

The staff who work at enVision are to be commended for their tremendous dedication to the people we support. Despite the high vacancies we still have hundreds of staff who stay because they love their work. We are pleased that over 200 staff have worked at enVision for over 5 years, and of these, over 100 have been here for over 10 years! This is a strong foundation for achieving our purpose; to inspire equality, inclusion and the value of all people.

## How we are Funded

Our funding from Manitoba's Department of Families, Community Living disAbility Services (CLDS), is allotted based on each person we serve, and the required hours needed to provide for their supports each day. This is called per diem funding. Per diems are added together to pay for all of enVision's necessities such as: operational costs, administration, Direct Support Professional wages, and management wages. For many people we serve, and for many years, the amount of funding per day has not changed, so it no longer reflects the ever-growing inflation rate, nor does it adequately reflect the professional remuneration deserved by staff.

## Government Announcement

We were very pleased to hear the recent government announcement that the budget included increased funding for wages this coming year. The \$10 million injection of funding for Residential DSPs and Managers across the province is a very good first step to addressing the decade's long neglect of this sector. This by no means fixes the shortfall of the past two decades, but it is a substantial commitment to services for people who live with an intellectual disability. It gives us hope that the lives of people we support have value in the eyes of our government, and hope that more opportunities are in the future for people we serve.

The announcement of increased funding also included an additional 2.7% of funding for Day Services. While we welcome any increase we can get, this is not nearly equivalent to the Residential announcement. The impact of this lack of priority for Day Services is seen in our Day Service staffing levels, resulting in an inability to serve all who need Day Services. We have not been able to welcome everyone back to Day Services following the pandemic, simply because we do not have enough staff. This is a direct impact of low funding levels for Day Services.

## You can Make a Difference

As an enVision supporter, you can help make a difference in the lives of the people we support. Contact your local MLA to insist that our DSPs and management staff, be recognized as the professionals that they are, and that funding for their compensation should match their level of responsibility. The goal for our sector is to get DSP wages in all service areas up to 60% above minimum wage, in order to be in line with other care giving sectors doing similar work to our DSPs. For more information about solving the community living labour



crises, see below for a diagram created by Abilities Manitoba. Although we are appreciative of the commitments made by government this year, we must continue to convey the importance of services for people who live with an intellectual disability. People we support are deserving of well paid, qualified, and stable staffing teams.

Visit [www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/voting/MyVotingInfo](http://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/voting/MyVotingInfo) or scan this QR code with your phone to be instantly connected to the Manitoba website to find your local MLA.



## Solving The Community Living Labour Crisis

There is a significant disparity between job expectations and the wages paid to Direct Support Professionals (DSP's)

### DSP's Are Interdisciplinary Professionals



Cost of living has gone up 24.5% compared to CLDS funding since 2000.

Cost of living is rising at a significant pace with COVID-19.

**\$16.93**

Is what CLDS would be funding hourly if CLDS funding kept pace with minimum wage increases since 2000.

If minimum wage kept pace with CLDS day service funding since 2000, it would currently be

**\$8.58**

### The Solution: A Comprehensive Labour Strategy That Links Wages and Increased Training Standards



\*With a commitment to keep that spread

Training plan can include a career ladder with transferable skills and substantially improved standardized training.

Learn more about the negative impacts of high DSP turnover on vulnerable people at:  
<https://www.c-q-l.org/resources/articles/dsp-turnover-negatively-impacts-the-health-and-safety-of-people-with-idd/>





# Moving with Stride

To 'stride', is to take a purposeful step. enVision's Stride project helps young adults to do just that; take purposeful steps as they complete school and move into adulthood.

Since 2018, enVision's Eastman Employment Services has hosted the Stride project, an initiative which prepares participants for life and work after school. Through the Stride program, participants prepare to face challenges by learning new life skills and by gaining experience which would enable them to find employment in their community.

The Stride program focuses on several key areas through classroom learning to enhance general life skills such as

goal setting, effective communication, managing finances, living healthy, learning new technologies and employment preparation. The first six weeks are focused in the classroom with weekly site visits to experience a presentation and/or tour from a local community resource. From classroom into the community, the Stride program creates an all-encompassing vehicle to creating community connection.

Through connections with the Steinbach Family Resource Center, the local RCMP, Red River College, Steinbach Credit Union, Sunshine Green House and Steinbach's Fitness Zone, participants are offered the opportunity to learn about what's available to them in community resources





*Lindsay Unrau*

FUNDRAISING & PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR

Written with content from Alexandra Penner,  
Employment Facilitator

and services. These experiences grow their knowledge, preparing them for a future that is packed with opportunity, giving them the courage and independence to go out into the world with stride.

One of the exciting components to this program is the ability to give back to the community by connecting with local non-profits. By visiting and learning about the incredible work that the Steinbach Community Outreach offers, participants are tasked with teaming up to practice their baking skills, creating delicious treats for people the Outreach assists. It's a rewarding feeling to help someone even through small acts of kindness.

The largest component of the Stride program is to facilitate three internship opportunities for each Stride participant.

With the practical skills learned within the classroom, participants are ready to take on new challenges and work alongside local employers to not only learn the working aspect of the specific position but to also practice their social skills. Cameron, a participant from Stride says, "It is a really good program to be in, you will learn a lot of different employment and life skills to help you build your confidence and successfully find work". Stride participants have had the opportunity to work with numerous local businesses. Most participants ended this program with an offer of employment from their intern employer.

enVision's Stride program has grown into such a huge success! With a purpose, participants are moving with stride to become independent and confident in their future endeavours.



# Congrats to Bill on his Tablet Win!

A BIG congratulations goes out to Bill Huppe who was nominated to win a Samsung Galaxy Tablet from Abilities Manitoba! Bill was one of four very lucky recipients who won this extraordinary gift. Bill, we hope that you're enjoying your new tablet!

Photo credit: Abilities Manitoba



## Thank You to our Abilities & Beyond Fundraiser Sponsors



**PRAIRIE PICKERS CAFE**  
Mervs Pitchfork Fondue  
OF MANITOBA







# Annual General Meeting 2022

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

## Virtual Meeting

6:30 pm Foundation AGM

6:45 pm enVision AGM

Register by June 7, 2022  
to [info@envisioncl.com](mailto:info@envisioncl.com)

The meeting link will be sent to your e-mail

## Membership Matters

Embracing our differences because everyone belongs!

Your membership expresses your support of enVision Community Living's mission to inspire equality, inclusion and the value of all people. Each member of enVision Community Living brings with them a personal connection to our mission. They contribute talent, time and insight into helping guide enVision's services. We value all members and the contribution they make to providing quality services to people who live with a disability.

Membership gives you the privilege of voting in regards to matters raised at the annual general meeting (AGM), held each June. A single membership gives an individual one vote, and a family membership gets two votes. Members will receive notice of the AGM in the mail, and also have the option to receive newsletters by mail or email.

**Individual Membership \$10 • 1 Vote** | **Family Membership \$15 • 2 Votes**

## Sign-up to Become a Member!

You can sign-up to become a member by visiting us at [envisioncl.com/become-a-member](https://envisioncl.com/become-a-member)



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# Legacy

**Make the enVision Foundation an important part of your life story.**

Arrange your legacy gift today to inspire equality, inclusion and the value of all people for future generations.

[www.envisioncl.com](https://www.envisioncl.com)

## Connect with us on Social Media!

@envisioncl

@envisioncl

@envisionclf

enVision Community Living

enVision Foundation

# Make A Difference. Make Your Donation.

In 2021-22 we're raising funds to support the construction of a new accessible home!

An accessible home offers one-level living, a no-step entrance, wider doorways and hallways, and wheelchair accessible bathrooms for people living with a disability. We invite you to support the construction of this new home by making a donation.

**Your donation will help break down barriers and empower people in our community to live more independently.**



OUR GOAL

## \$100,000

enVision  
foundation (2012) inc.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Accessibility at home is essential for increased independence for people living with a disability. Your donation will help create a more inclusive community.



**Yes! I want to support people in our community!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My enclosed donation:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or, I would like to help enVision with my monthly contribution (void cheque enclosed):

☐ \$20 ☐ \$30 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly donations will be processed on the 15th of each month.

Fill out this form and return to the **enVision Foundation, 84 Brandt Street, Steinbach MB R5G 0E1**  
You can also make your donation online by visiting [www.envisioncl.com](http://www.envisioncl.com)