ADVICE IS NICE

Supported Decision Making -We All Do It

FOSTERING GROWTH

Susie Fehr's Feline Friends

ENVISION NEWSLETTER • WINTER 2023



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



Jeannette DeLong
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There is something about the start of a new year that brings about a renewed hope for a promising future. This year is no different. We are anticipating the promise of improved outcomes for people we serve with continued implementation of Personal Outcome Measures®. We are excited about the recent Strategic Planning done by the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team. We are looking forward to the implementation of the Therap database. We are also feeling hopeful about filling our vacant staff positions. All of these initiatives are important to ensuring our services meet our mission and vision, including putting people we serve at the centre of all we do.

One of our person centred initiatives over the past years has been in the area of supporting people with decision making. Most of the time, people we serve make their own decisions, often with the advice of family, friends, or advisors who are close to them. Manitoba's Vulnerable Persons Act (VPA) refers to this process as Supported Decision Making. It's the way that most of us make decisions. We gather information, seek advice from others who may know something about a situation. We even Google it. With that information, we make many decisions in our day to day lives - decisions about everything from which shirt to wear, to where to go on vacation, to making purchases.

There are times, however, when a person we serve may be unable to make a decision for themselves, even with such supports. In these situations, a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) is appointed. Ideally, an SDM should be someone the person knows and trusts. This SDM could be a family member, friend, or an interested community member. At times, some people we serve, have no such person in their life. In these situations, the default SDM appointment is the Public Guardian and Trustees Office (PGTO) who make life's important decisions for the person. The PGTO worker assigned to a vulnerable will not have time to truly know the vulnerable person's values or wishes and more than likely will never meet the person.

Imagine if all of the important decisions about your life would get made by a stranger who has never met you.

This unfortunate reality is the case for too many people who live with an intellectual disability. Close personal SDMs are much more likely to engage in conversation with and about the person before making a decision. Decisions generally result in a better quality of life when they are truly person centered. Recognizing the need for SDMs who know and care about each person, enVision embarked on a mission to help people who were appointed the PGTO as an SDM. This commitment sent our staff on a path to deliberately help people we serve make meaningful connections, to find a person who cares and is willing to take on the responsibility of making decisions. We have helped people to connect to siblings, nieces and nephews, fellow church members, and in some cases, former enVision staff who have remained closely connected to the person we serve. We are proud of our work to help people have an SDM who knows them well, and have been recognized by other organizations and the Province of Manitoba for these efforts. But there is always more work to do.

We feel optimistic that one day we will help each person we serve to achieve this level of support. However, there are another 13 people who are still searching for that connection. To find one or two people who are willing to step up and be involved in their support is an ongoing effort. We are glad to be an integral part in people's lives, but we are always searching for how to support people to keep and maintain other caring relationships with people who will know them and be able to help them make the key decisions that will shape their lives.

enVision community living

FOSTERING GROWTH

Animal foster caretakers provide homes to animals before they are placed in forever homes. Often these pets have special needs like requiring extra care through sickness. All of them need lots of love and encouragement to adjust to home life. When the pets are adopted into their forever homes, the foster caretaker lets them go. Then the process starts all over again.

It takes a special person to take in a homeless animal to foster.

Meet Susie! The most caring and kind Cat Mama.

Susie started fostering early in spring of 2022 and loves being a foster. After Susie retired from working at enVision's Kindale Industries, she was looking for ways to keep her days busy. enVision has a strong person-centered approach that focuses on empowering the persons they support to live the life of their choosing. Susie wanted to stay connected and give back to her community. So, when Susie wanted to look into becoming a foster with Steinbach & Area Animal Rescue (SAAR), her support staff encouraged her and helped to research the process. Susie decided that this could be a welcome addition to their daily routines and she signed up with SAAR as a foster.

Since she started with SAAR, Susie has had seven foster cats enter her home. There are a lot of responsibilities. From cleaning up after them, to vet visits and endless filling up the food and water bowls. She has so much fun with all of them. Each new cat has their own character. It is a new challenge to help them feel at home. She has loved each one as her own. Support staff look forward to assisting Susie to be successful in this new role with her feline friends. This could include helping with cleaning, transportation, or getting supplies, it all depends on what Susie asks for and needs.



Susie has always loved animals, and had wanted a cat for a long time before fostering. Fostering has been a great way for Susie to give her love to animals on her own terms. She is a strong advocate for animals and speaks up for the right that every animal deserves to be cared for and loved. She makes sure to celebrate every cat that finds a loving home. Even though tears flow every time a cat moves on to its forever home, Susie wouldn't want it any other way. There will be a new cat knocking on the door in no time, it's usually just one phone call away.



STORY CONTRIBUTED BY
Janice Munro

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

ENVISION'S MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

enVision places a high value on the growth and development of employees. There is growing evidence that employees are more likely to be engaged and perform at a higher level when they feel that their contribution matters. Providing opportunities for employees to learn more skills and strategies to excel in their roles, inspired the creation of enVision's Mentorship Program. The Program, having been in existence for many years, was recently updated to better focus on skill development that could prepare employees for leadership growth within enVision.

To be successful at what you love, it doesn't hurt to have direction and assistance from another individual who has taken a similar path. enVision's Mentorship Program provides hands on, skills based, leadership development with experienced enVision leaders. Instead of focusing only on learning tasks, this updated Mentorship Program allows mentees to learn through real-life scenarios. Leaving behind budgets and forms, it explores the intent and meaning of being people-centered, and helps mentees be more aware of one's beliefs, emotions and the impact of those on interpersonal relationships.

Mentors dedicate 1 -2 hours a week with their mentees, with a strong onus on the mentee to be self-driven to learn. The curriculum includes introspective discussions, such as

- **What did you learn?**
- **What have you done differently in your work since the group discussion in relation to the learning outcomes?**
- **What have you challenged yourself to do in your work in relation to the learning outcomes?**

Participation in the Mentorship Program goes far beyond the rewarding feeling for the mentor of giving back or for the mentee of taking a course. There are a range of personal development benefits that mentors and mentees gain from the experience, including:



Increased self-confidence
Increased self-awareness
Leadership skills development
Stronger communication skills
Art of delivering feedback
Art of asking questions
Becoming a good listener
Exposure to new and different perspectives
Growing a personal network
Increased chance of promotion
Increased job satisfaction
Supporting another person
Paying it forward
Learning from someone else

After a successful 2022 season, enVision is already working towards their 2023 Mentorship program. Direct Support Professionals who are interested are welcome contact their Direct Report for more info.

Want a peek at the real enVision Mentorship Program experience?
Check out our mentor/mentee interview on "The Inside Scoop" in this issue!



Accessibility & Beyond

KICK OFF FUNDRAISER

The sky may have been grey, but enVision's Kindale Industries beamed bight blue on September 23, 2022. That is the day the enVision Foundation took over Kindale's kitchen to kick off its annual fall campaign the Accessibility and Beyond Drive-Through Dinner. A smooth and steady stream of cars arrived filled with hungry supporters. They brought their donations and appetites to support enVision's 2022 campaign project – the purchase of an accessible vehicle. This campaign is raising money to provide a vehicle that will benefit people supported by enVision's Residential Services. These are services provided for people who need support in order to enjoy a full and meaningful life in the community. The cars were first greeted by the delicious smell of barbeque. Then our smiling volunteers quickly approached the cars. There was a great sense of support as each vehicle brought a new face full of good wishes.

Merv's Pitchfork Fondue of Manitoba was the quarterback of that kitchen! They served steak sandwiches for each order. Sides of beans and potato salad were topped with a pickle, then boxed and handed off to the kitchen volunteers. Those volunteers added beautifully decorated cookies from Prairie Pickers Café to sweeten the deal. All this was wrapped up in our delivery bags, provided by Sobey's Steinbach, and whisked away to enjoy.

We would like to thank everyone who attended this kick-off fundraiser! With your support, we are on our way to providing increased opportunity for people who use enVision's Residential Services. This means more access to community places, events and medical services. This also provides opportunity to maintain important relationships.

The enVision Foundation continues its campaign for the purchase of a new accessible vehicle.



We aim to reach our goal of $85,000!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE, VISIT US AT WWW.ENVISIONCL.COM

The volunteers were sponsors RIVR Financial, enVision staff, including Directors, Coordinators and Managers, and enVision supporters. The volunteers were a little cold but had fun running from car to kitchen to serve a delicious dinner.

Thank you to our community for helping enVision inspire equality, inclusion and the value of all people.







Disability Employment Awareness Month

takes place every October to acknowledge and encourage businesses, employers, institutions, industry associations and other groups to take proactive steps to increase employment in the disability community.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH or DEAM was first proclaimed in Canada in 2010 by the Province of Manitoba. Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and New Brunswick followed within the next few years. Since then, employment service providers and local organizations across the country have brought DEAM to life by organizing events to engage employers, job seekers who live with a disability, and the public to promote the benefits of inclusive hiring.

The number of persons who live with a disability is on the rise. Statistics Canada states that currently about 6.2 million Canadians (22%) have a disability. Among those aged 25 to 64 years, persons with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%).

Why aren't more persons with disabilities in the workforce?

There are many barriers to employment faced by persons with disabilities. Some of these barriers have a large impact on these persons' daily lives, but are frustratingly outside their immediate control. Issues from inaccessible transportation to negative attitudes and assumptions about their abilities can be faced regularly. Lifting barriers requires all parties, governments, businesses and communities to be involved in the solution. While these barriers may loom larger and be harder to address, others are quicker to remove but may be simply overlooked.

Inaccessible websites can often cause an issue that the site owner may not even know is a barrier. Corporate social media sites may not have captions for visual or hearing impairments. Many popular sites have now made these captions semi or completely automatic. Barriers may not be removed because the level of involvement that is required to provide the appropriate solutions is overestimated.



What it comes down to:

An inclusive workforce holds many unique characteristics, such as;

- Having coworkers/employees with diverse viewpoints;
- Embracing the differences that people bring to the job;
- Taking the ideas and contributions from a variety of people to deliver the best possible product or service to your customer base.

Now, more than ever, inclusive hiring is framing the image of the future workplace. It is becoming vital for business success. The benefits of disability inclusion should be a powerful incentive for any organization.

BIGGER POTENTIAL CUSTOMER BASE MEANS BIGGER POTENTIAL REVENUE MEANS BIGGER POTENTIAL GROWTH; IN EVERY SENSE, FOR THESE ORGANIZATIONS.

According to recent Angus Reid polls, 78% of Canadians who responded said disability should be part of workplace diversity, equity and inclusion policies. Workplaces will be more competitive and more creative when they fully embrace the benefits of inclusive hiring in all roles and at all levels. A diverse workplace allows businesses insight to extend their markets.

It is important to remember that "disability" is a broad term because disability is diverse. An inclusive workforce begins with appreciating that people who live with a disability differ from one person to the next. The needs of each person will be individual. Their experiences living with their disability, the type of disability or that some persons live with multiple disabilities will be different. Many of these disabilities will be invisible. Inclusive hiring requires that skill assumptions and stereotypes should be tossed aside. Conference Board of Canada research found that the number of Canadians who have a physical disability alone is expected to increase 1.8% each year — reaching 3.6 million by 2030.

This all means that Canadians are likely to have more job applicants, employees or colleagues, working with a disability — disclosed or not.

This also means more job seekers will be needed by businesses to:

- Fill labour needs.
There's a labour shortage across business and industry sectors, and people who have a disability are a vital talent solution;

- Stay successful and competitive.
Businesses that expand their searches to include the talent pool of people who have a disability will have a tremendous number of skilled candidates, qualified for available roles;

- Demonstrate their commitment to inclusion.
Businesses will create an inclusive culture and reflect the needs of all their employees and the community they serve.



A November 2021 Angus Reid/Rick Hansen Foundation survey found that 62% of Canadians stated: if they knew the business had specific policies supporting employees who have a disability, they would be more likely to do business with that organization.

Employees who hold unique perspectives add value to your team. Commitment to a diverse workforce that includes employees with disabilities has a positive impact on work culture. Having a diverse and inclusive staff brings value to your employees' experiences while at work and it is shown through their positive morale. The authors of Canadians with Disabilities: Seizing the Opportunity summarized it clearly: businesses that don't access this talent and hire inclusively won't be competitive in their markets, in the years ahead.

FOR HELP IN NAVIGATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE, CONTACT ENVISION'S EASTMAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AT EASTMANEMPLOYMENT.COM OR INFO@EASTMANEMPLOYMENT.COM.









PERSON-CENTERED CARE

STORY SUBMITTED BY *Loretta Wiebe*

Staff Highlight: Brentwood

The staff team at enVision's Brentwood location is devoted to being person-centered in their care and support of people, in such a way as to promote equality, inclusion, and value every single day.

Being person-centered is a way of empowering the people supported by enVision to take charge of their own goals and quality of life.

Person-centredness is the belief that supports based on the person's views, input, and experiences can help improve their overall health and well-being.

Manager, Bridget Riley, and the staff team communicate with people served at Brentwood in a refreshingly open way. Interactions between residents and their support staff are encouraging, empathetic and compassionate.

With the right staff supports, people are able to make their own decisions. When a supported person makes a decision that might be best re-thought, the staff talk with the person respectfully, providing information to ensure the decision is informed. As the Manager, Bridget is especially good at modeling these valuing conversations to her staff team. The people supported at Brentwood are living a good life of their choosing, just as stated in the enVision Mission Statement.

With the help of her staff team, one of the people in the home sets her own weekly budget so that she can afford to purchase what is most important to her. This weekly process helps her to feel in control of her life, and actively engage in day to day decisions. With the right staff supports, another resident is much more engaged in making her own decisions than when she first arrived at Brentwood. It's exciting to see how she has learned to communicate how she really feels. This has happened because the staff have created a safe place for her to voice her concerns. Trusting staff and exercising her voice, has given her increased confidence in public and in participating in activities within the community.

Bridget is a strong person-centered leader and a positive example for that team to show what encouraging support can look like. The support staff are fully committed to adapting to each person's needs. They persist with person-centred care even when challenges arise. They continue to strive to provide the supports that each person needs and wants, instead of defaulting to staff opinion.

This staff team truly wants to do what is in the best interests of each person served, and wants to support them to live the life of their choosing. The team's efforts are resulting in equality, inclusion, and value every day for the people they support.

THE INSIDE SCOOP

We spoke with two of the Mentorship 2021 participants to get a first-hand review on enVision's Mentorship Program. Mike Hiebert, Mentor, and Emma Wilson, Mentee, shared their experiences with this career changing program.

What was your experience in the Mentorship Program?

MH: I really enjoyed being a mentor for two of our staff over the course of a year. It was great to be able to get to know them better as people and then build off that to help them grow—both as a person and as an employee.

EW: My experience in the mentorship program was very educational and beneficial in my personal growth as well as being able to grow and learn in my position as a direct support professional.

MH: I looked forward to our monthly meetings where all mentors and mentees met together for several hours of thought-provoking discussion and fun! Yes, even though the topics could become quite serious, there was always time and space for laughter.

What drew you to the Mentorship Program?

EW: I was drawn to the mentorship program because I wanted the chance to continue to grow my personal and work skills to provide better supports to those we serve.

MK: I am generally quite keen on the development of our staff. It is important to me that as an organization, we provide our staff with ways in which they can grow themselves, as this will also benefit the people we support. I often say that it is a personal hobby of mine to be able to assist people to think about things in ways they haven't before. The Mentorship Program gave me the permission and space to do just that.

What did you gain from this program?

EW: I really gained the ability to learn how to apply being vulnerable to my work and build life skills beneficial for my family and personal life.

MK: It was really great to see people connecting across all parts of enVision, regardless of where they work and what their role was. We wrapped up at the end with a meal that felt more like friends than co-workers.

How did this experience change you?

MK: The experience of being a mentor was stretching. I had a lot of good practice in developing my own ability to ask good questions. I look forward to the next group in the Program to continue to grow in my own ability to lead.

EW: This experience changed me and my career by helping me recognize and self reflect on how I work as a direct support professional.

Lastly, who would benefit from the Mentorship Program?

EW: Anyone looking to further their experience and knowledge as a direct support professional and build life and work skills would benefit from this program.

MK: Anyone who has a willingness to be challenged and a willingness to learn—with an eye towards to developing as leaders could really benefit. The idea is to develop people in their work lives, but so much of what we discuss crosses into our personal lives that I believe people walk away from this as better rounded individuals.

EW: It is really beneficial in self growth and learning skills to lead a team efficiently.

For more information of the Mentorship program, check out the full story "From the Inside Out - Mentorship 2022"

enVision's Eastman Employment Services offers employment assistance to people with hidden or visible disabilities, or who have other barriers to employment. Let them tell you:

EVERYTHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW, THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

EASTMAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

ANSWERED BY
Eastman Employment Services Staff

Who are we?

We are the amazing team at enVision's Eastman Employment Services (EES)! For 35 years EES has been successful in helping people we serve to find and maintain paid employment in the local business community. We are a dedicated staff team who provide services to persons who are unemployed or underemployed, and are motivated to seek employment.

What do we do?

We are faithfully working behind the scenes to assist people to become successful in their employment. We do this by learning about the person and the employer and making an intentional connection.

In addition to helping people find employment, Eastman Employment Services offers supports and resources to employers who want to create and maintain inclusive and diverse workplaces. Our goal with each person is to do our best to work ourselves out of a job, encouraging natural workplace supports.



What impact do we have?

Our services matter because we are raising expectations for, and making a difference in, diverse hiring in our community.

Now, more than ever, all workplaces are experiencing unprecedented staff shortages. Job seekers are a valuable commodity – employers are seeking candidates from a larger talent pool than they were before the pandemic. This is opening more doors to employment for people who live with a disability. Many organizations have overlooked hiring persons with hidden or visible disabilities because they are not sure of the dedication level required. We educate them on the benefits of a diverse workplace. We show them the abilities available from this unique labour pool. We connect them to that talent.

What advice do you have for employers/job-seekers who are having trouble finding the right fit?

Contact us! Visit www.eastmanemployment.com or see us in our office at 395 Main St in Steinbach, MB. We'll be waiting!

Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week

We kicked off #DSPweek with a toast to the hardworking people supporting hardworking people on #BreakfastMonday! Breakfast is the most important meal for a reason – it gives you the energy to get through your very important day.

A lot of people say sitting down to a delicious dinner is the best part of the day, so our DSP's took home some great Italian food to enjoy for #TastyTuesday! The reward of supporting individuals and making a difference in your community is a hard "best part of the day" to top; let's hope we can hit their top 3.

#WellnessWednesday we encouraged all Direct Support Professionals to indulge in some self care! Putting yourself first is necessary when others are counting on you every day.

#ThankYouThursday - No jokes. No puns. Just thanks to all the hardworking Direct Support Professionals...For shining your light even on dark days. For lifting others even when you're weak. For being the smile that someone waits all day to see. To those who find the best in the worst and the unbelievable in the best, please know that we see you, we appreciate you, we thank you.



YOU MATTER DAY

You Matter Day was formed to remind all involved that the wants, needs and expectations of Direct Service Professionals are important to us, always. No matter what, you matter now. Beyond DSP recognition week and beyond You Matter Day, Direct Support Professionals matter.





Connect with us on Social Media!

- @envisioncl
- @envisioncl
- @envisionclf
- enVision Community Living
- enVision Foundation



Our annual Fall Campaign is raising funds to support the purchase of an accessible vehicle.

Your donation will allow people who use enVision's Residential Services to access community places and events, participate in every aspect of life in the community, and maintain important relationships.

enVision foundation inc.



enVision Foundation's
Accessibility and Beyond Drive-Through Dinner

enVision

Make A Difference, Make Your Donation.

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: _____

Fill out this form and return to the enVision Foundation, 84 Brandt Street, Steinbach MB R5G 0E1. You can also make donations online at www.envisioncl.com

My enclosed donation:

☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $75 ☐ 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.