

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 7TH ANNUAL

**NORTHEAST ALBERTA REGIONAL
CONFERENCE**

FT. McMURRAY

NOVEMBER 4 – 6, 2005

***BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY:
“TOGETHER WE CAN”***

Prepared by

Allan Douglas & Associates
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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2005

I. OPENING CEREMONIES

Don Schultz, the chair of the Northeast Alberta Community Board welcomed the participants to the conference. He then asked Elsie Yanik to lead delegates in a traditional aboriginal prayer.

Don then opened the conference with the following points. This year marks our 7th annual conference and over 7 years of Community Governance in Northeast Alberta for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. Last year our conference theme was “Building Community Capacity: Sharing Individual Gifts and Celebrating Champions”. We continue with that work as this year’s conference is Building Community Capacity: Together We Can.”

This year’s conference, similar to our previous ones, has three major components.

The first is about Relationships. We have an opportunity this weekend, with our time together, to strengthen current relationships and to build new ones. So take time to do this and meet new people.

The second is about Continuous Learning. Our conference sessions, Internet café, and our community working sessions on Saturday are examples of how we learn together.

The third component is about celebrations. It is very important that we celebrate our success as a large community and recognize the accomplishment of our members. This also gives us a chance to party, later tonight we will enjoy each others company at the dance.

He then introduced the co-host for the conference. “This year’s co-host is no stranger to the community or good old-fashioned hard work. She is co-chair for the Fort McMurray Self Advocacy Support Group. She is the Northeastern Representative for the Provincial Summit Planning committee for the self-advocate Provincial Conference. And She is a volunteer with the Fort McMurray Mental Health self help group. She is a wonderful person with a full heart. It is my great pleasure to introduce Ms. Gladys Bingham.”

Gladys welcomed the 250 participants on behalf of the organizing committee. She added “Conferences and gatherings of this nature cannot occur without the support of the local municipality. It gives me great pleasure to welcome her worship Melissa Blake – Mayor of the Municipality of Wood Buffalo and I would ask her to please bring greetings on behalf of the municipality.”

II. ADDRESS BY MAYOR MELISSA BLAKE

I am pleased to be here and be the host community for such a wonderful event. It is my privilege to welcome you all on behalf of council and the 73,000 citizens that they represent.

In the region from 1996 until 2010 there is an estimated \$100 billion that will be spent on the oil sands. When there is that much activity in a community there is a workforce required to support all of that and expanding beyond to other areas such as education, health, social services etc. In the same timeframe our population is expected to grow to 100,000 people. The community is not quite growing fast enough but I have every confidence that the spirit and energy that is on the street reflects a “we can do” attitude.

The Wood Buffalo Municipality amalgamated about ten years ago and it encompasses about 68,000 square kilometres. There are 11 communities and Ft. McMurray is the largest. Of the 73,000 citizens, 61,000 are in Ft. McMurray. The rural communities are distinct.

When I think about diversity and the distinction that is in the community, I think about our citizenship ceremony that had 108 new Canadian citizens from 36 different countries. At Father Clark school downtown the classrooms represent 42 different countries. We are proud of the diversity and there are not that many places in the rest of the world with the freedom and the support for distinct people to pursue their dreams and make them a reality.

But not excluded when I think of diversity are people with special needs physical and/or developmental. **Disability is not inability** and one of the best things about the heated economy is that more people are given more chances to prove themselves in the workforce.

I know that in this room there are well respected business people, educators as well as wonderful students. I also know that there are many amazing volunteers and all of you contribute to building stronger communities. And you place some much needed emphasis on encouraging development in PDD and this year’s theme ‘Building Community Capacity: Together We Can’ is simple but very much to the point. It is about how partnering our efforts we can accomplish great things.

This year we will be declaring December 3rd as the International Day of Disable Persons as the result of efforts to increase the awareness and understanding of people with disabilities. I sincerely hope for you all that this year’s conference educates and inspires you and that you come away with new relationships. We thank you all for being here today and I hope you enjoy it all.

III. INTRODUCTION OF MR. BLAIR LUNDY

Don Schultz called upon Mr. Blair Lundy to bring greetings on behalf of the Provincial Board.

Mr. Blair Lundy, the Vice-Chair of the Provincial Board. “It gives me great pleasure to be with you in Ft. McMurray and I am going to take an opportunity this evening at the banquet to bring more formal greetings. It is always nice to visit with you folks; I had my first opportunity last year. I met a lot of friends and it was good to reacquaint myself with them last night. I look forward to spending today and tomorrow with you.”

IV. INTRODUCTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHEAST ALBERTA COMMUNITY BOARD

Don Schultz introduced the members of the Northeast Alberta Community Board. The Vice-Chair from St. Paul, Donna Desjardins, from Vegreville Ralph Gorrie, from Hilliard Glenn Hennig, from Legal Coleen Marks, from Vimy Caren Mueller, and from Lac LaBiche Floyd Thompson.

V. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Don then introduced the guest speaker, Patrick Jarvis.

His topic was “The Power of One”. That is about the power of a person, an idea, a concept but more importantly if you think about the influence one individual can have, think about two people, they can genuinely create and work miracles. In Canada we have many choices to make the world a better place.

I argue that the future depends as much on your choice as much as the many other things it depends upon. Rosa Parks changed profoundly the politics and the interaction of society in the United States simply because she refused to get off her seat on her bus. She changed the attitudes about the treatment of Afro Americans. She combined with others to change society. Terry Fox had an idea that he wanted to help cancer survivors and it was one idea, one choice, one person and one country that he would run across one step at a time. Think about how he changed attitudes about the ability to fight and conquer cancer. He also changed the perception about what disability is. Mother Theresa said “History very rarely conspires for us to all do great things; however, we have all been given the power to do small things in a great way”.

If you have people with a common shared understanding that is what makes a community. I am looking at a community in front of me. In building capacity if we can help our communities to integrate and include people of all abilities, all genders, all races, all colours and all religions, that is true capacity to me.

I am one of 4 million Canadians with a disability and while we have similar issues we are all unique. We do not seek pity or charity; we simply seek honour and respect and to be understood. We do not want to be excluded outside the circle where formerly society tended to put people with any kind of disability where you were shunned and excluded. Neither do we want to be inside the circle and be protected like an innocent child.

When I was in the hospital after losing my left hand and on day three I was lying there in bandages and my brother brought me a right handed baseball glove. He said we will teach you to catch, take the glove off, pull the ball out and throw it. He realized that a kid brother needed some help to show that he would have a **different ability** and would have to make some adjustments but could certainly be back playing sports.

When I was cut from the junior basketball team the coach of the senior team said I could be his assistant and fill water bottles and do other chores but he would teach me how to dribble behind my back, perfect my jump shot, and he taught me how to **take advantage of a disadvantage**. The next year I played on the senior boy's team.

Everyone in this room has everything we need to have a life that is fulfilling and contributing to society. You need to use what you already have. One person, one idea, one step at a time. George Bernard Shaw said that "Some people see the way things are and ask why, others dream of things that never were, and say why not". For our community people with disabilities of whatever nature need to keep asking that question "Why not?" Why can we not be fully contributing members of society, why can we not be accepted for our abilities?

When the plenary session ended the participants reconvened in small groups for the various professional development sessions.

VI. SATURDAY EVENING CEREMONIES

After dinner Don Schultz again welcomed everyone to the conference and introduced the special guests. Then Gladys introduced Blair Lundy, the Provincial Board Vice-Chair.

Blair said "I am really pleased to be here at your seventh annual conference to bring greetings on behalf of all of the members of the Provincial Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. I hope you all were able to enjoy the wonderful centennial events that took place in our province this summer. It has been a time to reflect on the changes that have happened over the last hundred years in Alberta. For people with developmental disabilities there have been a lot of changes to make our lives better, but there is still a lot of work to do.

As Alberta starts its second century our communities look a lot different, with people from different cultures and religions, with different needs. Our population is getting older and we will need strong community and family support to maintain the quality lives we enjoy. Health issues and disabilities have become a reality for many people. This shows how much people with developmental disabilities have in common with many Albertans who need support to lead quality lives. For everyone to have quality lives we need to look at new ways of thinking and doing things at PDD, and each of us as individuals.

At PDD our main focus is to consider how changes can affect people's lives. We also need to make our roles and responsibilities as individuals, families, communities and the service sector very clear. This means doing things differently and focusing on the best results for individuals and supporting communities to include individuals with developmental disabilities. It is in our communities that individuals are fully included,

where they can meet their personal goals and become contributing and participating members of our society. Everyone and every community must contribute to fully realize this vision for all Albertans. Many people are contributing and we are making progress.

I am pleased to see more self-advocates taking on new roles, making their own decisions and participating more and more in the social and economic life of our province. We know that with more people contributing and being involved in our communities that we will experience growth and our communities, province, and country will all be stronger. Right now there are great opportunities to truly include individuals with developmental disabilities in our communities. There are more employment opportunities and I believe an increased willingness to build networks of community support to make including people a reality. PDD is one resource within a network of community supports that must work with others. We must focus on results in our communities and we must build the right relationships with individuals, families, organizations and communities to realize this vision of Alberta's future. You are all making a difference in the lives of individuals on a daily basis and you are the ones who will help to achieve our vision of communities where everyone truly belongs. Together we are better; we are stronger.

I want to thank you very much for inviting me to your conference I bring greetings from the entire Board as well as Minister Yvonne Fritz.

Annually in Alberta the Norm McLeod awards to recognize people whose contributions and work are improving the quality of life for Albertans with developmental disabilities. The awards were created in celebration of the career and contribution of someone many of us know and have come to greatly admire. Throughout his 35 year career, Norm McLeod inspired countless people through his untiring commitment to community inclusion. This year the Provincial Board was pleased to honour a tremendous individual from Northeast Alberta, Mr. Randy Jacobsen who received his award from the Provincial Chair Betty Thompson and from our Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, the Honourable Yvonne Fritz. Randy I would like you to rise so your friends in Northeast can recognize your efforts.”

VII. PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Don Schultz then introduced the partners of the Northeast Alberta Community Board who were in attendance and asked the participants to join him in thanking them. He also acknowledged the sponsors that helped to make the conference possible.

VIII. THE AWARDS

The Northeast Alberta Community Board was pleased and honoured to facilitate the 2005 Community Recognition Awards, the sixth year they have been presented. Each Community Council was invited to identify one recipient for each of the following awards:

Service Award. Purpose: To recognize the on-going service contribution of an individual, family, organization or business partner made on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities and their families.

Merit Award. Purpose: To recognize an individual for their outstanding achievement and the contribution they have made in their own life or for the lives of others with developmental disabilities.

The awards were presented by representatives of the various community councils.

Whitecourt

Christine McGinnes presented the awards for Whitecourt. The Merit Award was presented to Dale Donnelly and Candy Sawyer the co-chairs of the community council. They are both very active in the community. The Service Award went to the Repeat Boutique in Whitecourt. It recycles used items and all the staff are helpful volunteers.

Westlock

Sylvia Yakimchuk and Roseanne Krikke presented the awards for Westlock. The Merit Award was presented to Roseann Gezmish who has coached Special Olympics and has planned fundraisers. The Service Award went to Dennis Gambill.

Vegreville

Jamie Lafantasie presented the awards for Vegreville. The Merit Award was presented to Robert Baker who is a hard worker who has been successful in employment and who enjoys his home and his pets. The Service Award went to Dan Beaudette from the Vegreville Observer/News Advertiser who has employed people with disabilities.

St. Paul

Dennis Duchesneau and his daughter presented the awards for St. Paul. The Merit Award was presented to Lise Lefebvre and Marie Line Joly. These two soul mates are examples of who we all strive to be in our communities. They grew up together, went to school together and they now live together in their own home in St. Paul. They work together in a catering business. The Service Award went to Lori Letourneau. She started service people with developmental disabilities 18 years ago. She was employed by the St. Paul Abilities Network in 1987 working with children with special needs. She is now the Director of Career Supports.

Lac La Biche

Joan Pattison and Linda Dwyer presented the awards for Lac La Biche. The Merit Award was presented to Yvette Crane who is attending Portage College and she tries her best at everything she does. The Service Award went to Hamars Foods. They used a PDD's cassette on supported employment in their staff training sessions. They then accepted a volunteer as a member of their staff and made that position one of paid employment. Hamars used natural supports from their own staff members.

Fort McMurray

Chyann Blackmore presented the awards for Fort McMurray. The Merit Award was presented to Melissa Strowbridge for the independence she has shown in her job placement. Soon after she started her job at IGA she no longer needed her job coach and she continues to be successful in her position. The Service Award went to the Oilsands Discovery Centre. It gave the Start Program the opportunity to run the Fresh Start Café in the summer months for several years and continues to be inclusive.

Cold Lake

Christine Cassie presented the awards for Cold Lake. The Merit Award was presented to Hannah Hatch who works at McDonalds and volunteers elsewhere as well. She continues to increase her independence and advocacy skills. The Service Award went to Orbiting Trends who opened their doors to people with developmental disabilities 11 years ago. All staff are treated equally and it is a fun place to work.

Bonnyville

Lawrence Noel presented the awards for Bonnyville. The Merit Award was presented to Joshua Luyendyk. The Service Award went to the Town of Bonnyville because they opened their doors to people with disabilities for at least the last 5 years. Different people work in various areas. The Town has been particularly supportive of Joshua Luyendyk.

Barrhead

Andrew Dables presented the awards for Barrhead. The Merit Award was presented to Jason Bubik. The Service Award went to Blue Heron Bowl.

Athabasca

Doug Kariel and Arlene Brost presented the awards for Athabasca. The Merit Award was presented to Grace Couturier. The Service Award went to Maureen Rymer.

Communicator of the Year Award

Don Schultz introduced the Northeast Alberta Board Communicator of the Year Award.

The Northeast Alberta Community Board views communications in the region as a high priority. Strengthening the communities understanding of the valuable contribution individuals with developmental disabilities make to our society is a goal of the Board. In addition, the Board acknowledges that communications is something that is done throughout the community by a range of supporters. In order to acknowledge those who act as communicators for the region, an annual award program for Communicator of the Year has been endorsed by the Board. In keeping with the Board's theme of Building on Community Strengths, these awards recognize that individuals and organizations in our communities advance the Board's goals for individuals with developmental disabilities in the Region.

Any person with or without a developmental disability, or organization who has been an ambassador for persons with developmental disabilities, is eligible to receive this award. Whether an individual or an organization has been a voice, a face, or any kind of champion for raising awareness of the valuable contribution individuals with developmental disabilities make in the region, they are eligible to receive this recognition by the Board.

This year the Board has selected as recipient for the Communicator of the Year Award for 2005 Dr. Alex Hillyard.

Don presented the award to Alex who thanked the Board and the Northeast Alberta communities for their support to him as CEO.

IX. PRESENTATION TO DR. ALEX HILLIARD

Donna Desjardins reminded participants that PDD was created seven and a half years ago. At that time Dr. Alex Hillyard came to put order in the Northeast PDD. The Northeast Alberta Community Board has a special gift for Alex, a star blanket. The Board members wanted to thank Alex for his honesty, integrity, friendship, and vision.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2005

X. OPENING COMMENTS

Don Schultz called upon the Interim CEO, Dale Drummond, to speak to the conference.

Dale explained that he had formally been with the Northeast Alberta Community Board for a month and a half but he has been working with and beside PDD in the Northeast for about four years now. He said he is familiar with the organization and this is his third conference.

It is an honour and pleasure to serve this organization. Dale has lived in Northeast Alberta since 1982 and working with Community Development has been to many communities in the region.

He reported that he has been to a number of community councils and he looks forward to visiting all of the communities.

He recognized a great group of professional and dedicated staff who he feels fortunate to be working with in this new role. This conference is a testament to their hard work and dedication.

Don asked the audience to give the staff of PDD a round of applause in appreciation for the wonderful work they do.

XI. COMMUNITY CAPACITY – COMMUNITY WORKGROUPS

Gladys Bingham outlined the agenda for the day and introduced the lead facilitator, Allan Douglas.

Allan explained that this is the session where the participants would have a chance to tell the Northeast Alberta Community Board what you have achieved since we met in Cold Lake last year and what you plan to do over the next year. Last night Alex reminded us that at our first conference in Westlock we developed a vision for the year 2010. We have been working towards that vision ever since.

The facilitators have copies of what the goals of each community were as developed in Cold Lake. In the first hour we would like you to look back over the past year to identify progress or achievements. Some will be related to the Cold Lake goals but there may also be other successes that were not predicted a year ago.

In the second hour we want you to set the directions for an action plan for your community for the next year. Identify what you would like to accomplish over the next year and pinpoint the actions that will need to take place in your community to make that happen.

This will enable you to give your Board a sense of what they will need to do over the next year to support you and your communities in the most important areas you identify.

XII. COMMUNITY CAPACITY – COMMUNITY WORKGROUPS REPORTS

The following are the reports from the community groups. Some are from the flip chart notes and some were supplemented by verbal reports to the plenary session at the end of the conference. Some of the community groups joined for these two sessions so there are fewer reports than the original number of groups.

Whitecourt

Members of the group: Mary Jo Husby, Dale Donnelly, Cecile Blanchette, Talayna Despina, Doug Case, Christine McGinnis, Effie McGinnis, Gary Ricthie, Marylynn Tipton, Dan Prichard, Annette Butler, Ashley Butler, Thelma Hilland, Marlene Paisley, Sherry Miller, Candy Sawyer, Terry Strom, Colleen Marks.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- On the **safety** goal, we have traffic lights at Walmart.
- In **housing**, the HOME PROGRAM started in Whitecourt to assist people with low incomes to buy homes with training and help with down payments. The first training event occurred in September 2005.
- With respect to **AISH** the monthly amount was increased and people can earn more per month before AISH is reduced. In October new benefits such as medical transportation and childcare were included.
- In the area of **employment** there are significantly more people working this year than last. Most jobs are paying more than the minimum wage. One

person is in school full time and the others, except for one, are working for wages.

- The town and county **transportation** committee is working to get public transportation in the community. The next meeting is on December 5, 2005 at 7:00 PM.
- The number of **volunteers** has increased dramatically including the breakfast club for school, Repeat Boutique and Affordable Fashions, the RCMP fun run, the Oilman's golf tournament, and cleaning up the river valley. They applied for a town garbage cleanup but it was not accepted and there were many applications. The group will try again next year.

How did we accomplish our goals?

- Self advocates, staff, PDD and community organizations **worked together** as a group to achieve our goals.
- The economic **boom** has helped. The positives are that there are more jobs and employers call the agency asking for staff. The negatives are that agency staff are leaving for higher pay elsewhere, staff cannot be recruited due to the funding levels, and staffing is not consistent.

Action Plans:

1) Independent ECHO Day

- A **fundraiser** to assist EDHO to help individuals become more independent.
- Build on the ideas from **Small Sparks**. Dale will take the lead with the Community Council and the ECHO/COP Program.

2) Safety

- Members of the community will test lights such as the crosswalk at Canadian Tire. They will raise their concerns by requesting more **crosswalks** including one near ECHO and elsewhere and identify concerns such as speeding and line painting at the Spanish Villa. Wheelchair access is also an issue.
- The Community Council will write a **letter** to Town Council and copy the MLA and the Town Mayor requesting changes.

3) Need an AISH worker in Whitecourt

- The Community Council will send **letters** to the MLA and the Minister (Yvonne Fritz) identifying the need for an AISH worker in Whitecourt.
- There are a number of people who need help and it is **cumbersome**, awkward and too time consuming for AISH recipients to fax pay slips and make appointments.
- There is a need for **more information** about AISH in the community.

4) Staffing at agency level

- The group wants to understand the **allocation process** from the Provincial Board to the Community Board and from the Community Board to the services in the community. Why is there a surplus in Northeast and none in other regions while agencies are fighting to keep good staff?
- The Board should recognize the need for **funding for staffing** so agencies can keep staff.
- **Group Actions:**
 - **Attend** NEPDD Board meetings to ask about the funding process.
 - **Make presentations** at NEPDD Board meetings on the difficulties in the community and see what can be done about funding needs for hiring and maintaining staff.
 - Ask the NEPDD Board to **explain** where the money goes.
 - Write **letters** to the MLA.
 - **Join** forces with seniors, colleagues in the community and other agencies in the region.
 - Make this group **more involved** with other groups (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs) to make themselves known and have more lobby power.
 - Encourage agencies that provide services to **talk to one another**.

5) Housing

- **Follow up** on the HOME Program.

6) Discrimination/Bullying

- “Be Better not Bitter”
- Help people **understand** and deal with their feelings.
- Mary Jo will track down the **acting group** from the Self Advocacy Summit.
- Look for bullying **resources**.
- Get a program on bullying into the **schools** including the Foster Parent Association and an RCMP Officer.
- Set up an anti bullying **committee** at the Community Council.
- ‘Be the Change’ in the **high school** program.

7) Travel

- The Skyline Social Club will work on **travel**, they want to go places and learn more about Alberta.

Westlock

Members of the group: Bonny Soloway, RoseAnne Krikke, Denise Young, Christina Stebanuk, Georgina Bondarchuk, Leona Bondarchuk, Cindy Alexanderson, Katherine Crowe, Shirley Coles, Dennis Gambill, Roseann Gezmish, Lesley Glenn, Kaylynn Jehn, Tyler Malic, Cara Moerman, Caren Mueller, Tammy Mutch, Clayton Waterhouse, Sylvia Yakimchuk.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- A sub-group of about ten people from the Community Council wrote a **song** about AISH. The words were approved by the Community Council.
- They talked about a **partnership** with the high school but due to short timelines that did not work.
- The song has now been completed with a volunteer singer so the **potential** of the tape is not known.
- The Barrhead **Arts Centre**.
- The community is growing and there is a **skateboarding park**.
- The **poverty** in action group had a supper and invited the community to increase awareness. Human Resources and Employment and the media were present.
- Friends First addressed **wheelchair accessibility**.
- The Community Council was stuck in a rut and was **not sure** where it wanted to go.
- They held an **AISH forum** to explain why it should go up and they filled out a survey, signed petitions, and talked openly to increase awareness.
- **Speakers** were arranged to address concerns such as self-esteem and body image.
- With respect to **transportation** about twenty people were involved in the Action Bus and they arranged taxi cabs at the senior's rate if a ten pass is bought. They are exploring ways to use the community capacity dollars to help.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- Get **permission** from the singer to release the AISH song. Tammy, Roxanne and Cara will get the permission.
- The group wants to find a **radio station** to play the song and share it with other communities and regions.
- Katherine Crowe will lead an effort to get the song on a **CD** and get it out to:
 - Community Councils, perhaps as a fundraiser.
 - Other PDD groups.
 - The Provincial Board.
 - Politicians.
 - The PDD Website.
 - Roseann and Kaylynn to take it to the Community Council

Transportation/Mileage

- The **costs** are high for people with disabilities and staff who use their own cars.
- Tyler will speak to the **media**.
- Katherine will look into a cost-effectiveness **study**.
- Sylvia will try to get a **cab** deal.
- The group will look to **natural supports**.
- **Volunteers** could help with transportation.
- Tammi will invite the FCSS person to the community council to provide **information** about a transportation program.
- To get to the city Cindy will check on possible **deals** with Greyhound and affordable vans.
- The group will encourage more **bike trails**.
- Katherine will check into deals for **lower gas prices** at service stations.

Community Awareness

- The group will try to get an ad or **article** in the paper to tell people about the community council meetings.
- Roseann and Kaylynn will look into a **pamphlet** with the mission and purpose on it.
- Clayton will look into a **poverty supper** and inviting the media.
- A sub-group will work on **locations** for the supper.
- Roseann will put it on the **agenda** for the community council.

Housing

- There is a need for more **affordable** housing.
- The group will call Irene Fraiser at FCSS and **invite** her to the next community council meeting to discuss the HOME Program. Roseann will put it on the agenda.
- Clayton and Roseann will find out about **community programs** to help folks buy a home. Can there be a percentage of low income housing from developers.
- Clayton will check out the **school** to build low income housing.

Vegreville #1

Members of the group: Helen Litwin, Robert Baker, Connie Andriashyk, Melissa Gauvin, Daniel Larrivee, Garret Mytrash, Joseph Pich, Ralph Gorrie.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- Last year the **employment** action plan included identifying partners and pushing forward. Little was accomplished in this area.

- Another was to mentor and **connect** with employers and the Rotary Club. This was not followed up either.
- However, with **employment** there are more jobs than there were last year.
- Business owners are **accepting** people for who they are, e.g., Albert's Family Restaurant and the Observer/News Advertiser.
- There are **volunteering** opportunities and there are partnerships with FCSS, VALID, WJS etc.
- In the **transportation** area there is the wheelchair accessible van and subsidy program supported by the town and county.
- The **attendance** at the community council has increased because individuals want their rights heard.

What are we doing differently than we did last year?

- Individuals are more assertive and are getting more **involved in the community**.
- The group has been **educating the community** and answering questions.
- The person centred **planning** process is underway.
- The community council has invited other **self advocates** to talk.
- The AISH increase has resulted in new programs and there are **more activities** available in the community.
- There was **disability awareness** in October that included the van.
- There was a change in the school policy related to **bullying** and this early start makes the community better and less violent.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- 1) The group will advocate for **minimum wage** for all jobs. They will talk to employers about individual skill levels and available jobs. Involved will be the community council members, the MLA, VALID, WJS and the Chamber of Commerce. The goal is completion by November 2006.
- 2) Meetings of **self advocates** have started and the plan is to continue those meetings. The community council will bring in guest speakers and they are willing to meet more often.
- 3) A goal for June 2006 is to have one individual on a **board** in the community. Community members and self advocates will follow up on this.
- 4) The community council will make **presentations** to the community regarding employment. The council will approach VALID, WJS, the MLA and the Chamber of Commerce.
- 5) An event will be planned to **recognize employers** in November 2006.
- 6) The community council and self advocates will plan **more social events** starting in February of 2006.
- 7) There will be an opportunity to **vote** for the co-chairs of the community council in January 2006.

Vegreville #2

Members of the group: Bruce Uditsky, Anne Hughson, Judy Flessau, Jamie Lafantaisie, Denianne Thiel, Glen Hennig.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- The tipping point for a big success story was the awarding of a community capacity grant to convert a **van** purchased by The Vegreville Transportation Society. They then leased it to a cab company to have it operate as a cab. There was funding and in kind donations from other partners GM Doalon, the Lions, Rotary and businesses. The county contributed funds as well.
- The community turned some of its provincial government **funding** to the Vegreville Transportation Society.
- The lease **returns money** to the Society and the van represents a \$64,000 multi-year community effort.
- The taxi vouchers are **subsidized**.
- The use of the bus/van can possibly be **expanded** for community inclusion purposes beyond medical appointments.
- The group will review the **usage statistics** and some service clubs and churches will provide or subsidize transportation and bus passes.
- An example of a success in someone with many community connections getting rides and **traveling** all over the province.
- More people are **attending** community council meetings and they have organized for larger space as needed.
- A question is how to enable people who live a distance away to **access** community council meetings. Ideas include teleconferencing, speaker phones, sharing rides and providing follow-up for those who cannot make the meetings.
- There may be a need for community councils in **smaller communities** a distance from Vegreville. These communities connect to other communities based on trade and church etc. NEPDD was asked to investigate.
- A presentation by parents to the Fort Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce resulted in Soby's **employing** six people. This was a parent driven success. They are looking at making another presentation and exploring other possible employers such as Boston Pizza.
- Better ways are needed to reach **elderly parents** and their sons and daughters who are not getting support. The group wants to determine where they gather to share information and connect them to PDD earlier.
- Better ways are also needed to reach **individuals at home** who are not participating in the community. To get to them they will be invited to meetings and workshops through Family Voices.
- The group can access the Society for Retired and Semi-Retired for inexpensive assistance with **guardianship** applications.
- More people are **employed** than last year.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- The group is considering applying for a **Community Research Grant** and will download information from the Website. For example on transitioning from children's services to PDD. They would also like to learn from other communities about transportation.
- There has been good use of **community capacity grants** across the northeast PDD. This is a past and ongoing success that has been underutilized.
- Engage more with **local politicians** to support and understand PDD and to let their constituents know about PDD.
- Have PDD and families attend municipal and county **council meetings** to present on PDD.
- Share information with schools about **community inclusion** by connecting with Family Voices, distributing information to schools and parents, holding information meetings and sharing information through services for children with disabilities about accessing PDD and other adult supports.
- A larger number of good people are needed to fill the **empty seats** on the NEPDD Board. They will establish a committee to lobby the Minister to appoint people to represent communities like Smokey Lake and Fort McMurray. The group wants Board members to seek interested people from those communities and let them know about this need.
- Use the **community capacity grants** to attract the interest of municipal and county councils and politicians.
- Look at **inclusion** at Portage College in Vegreville as there is interest in bodywork, customizing cars and racing cars. It is proposed that AACL follow-up.
- Increase **community awareness** of families and self advocates by holding a meeting with politicians, the community, the Chamber of Commerce and the community council.
- Support more families to **hire and manage** their own supports. Gather information on how this has been done and share it with other families and self advocates. Produce a **guide** for self advocates and families e.g., on legal issues. Hold **workshops** on how to do this.
- Look at how individuals could **own their own homes** or share ownership with others. Gather partners such as realtors, mortgage brokers, banks. Information could be shared with families and agencies.
- There is a need for a pool of **relief staff** for families who hire their own staff and/or natural relief support. If agencies have a pool of staff they could make the list available. Ask service clubs and churches to maintain a roster of people to fill in on short notice.
- Support people to **return from Michener** to the community. Find out from NEPDD who is still in Michener from our communities and approach families, guardians and individuals to offer support and planning.
- **Help people move** from more congregate care to less.

- Enable a **self advocate to be appointed to the NEPDD Board** – at least as an intern. This means providing support to participate such as transportation. The first step is to find out if the Board and the community support this and, if so, write letters of support to the Minister. The decision to appoint and support an intern is the NEPDD Board's to take.

St. Paul # 1

Members of the Group: Cheryl Crocker, Tim Bear, Paul Fuyarchuk, Eugene McCafferty, Shale Kelford, Marion Lee, Valerie Malo, Dorothy Robertson, Donna Desjardins.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- People are connected with the **golf course**.
- A connection between the Special Olympics and the **swimming pool** has not been made but Donna will take this back to Special Olympics.
- In **housing**, one house was built during the year and there are plans for another.
- A **Small Sparks** idea was a 'drive in movie' event at a farm and there were multiple other imaginative events.
- In **recreation** the Special Olympics were accepted in bowling and individual high scores are recognized. There are more people involved in softball.
- A new community **BBQ** is bringing people together.
- More people are working and living **independently** and SPAN no longer does contract work.
- There is better **transition** to adult services.
- There is **participation** on the SPAN Board by an individual with a developmental disability.
- There is increased **participation** by self advocates and families on the community council.
- There are more **integrated** recreational activities.
- There is a **scholarship** at Blue Quills College in social work.
- There are **better links** with Athabasca University and Portage College.
- There is a **Tuck group** that is a social club to learn skills.
- A **cribbage club** is trying to be included in the larger group.

Impacts

- There has been a profound impact on people's lives with remarkable consequences. A caution is not to become too focused on describing what is going on.
- St. Paul is a **safe and caring** community.
- The St. Paul community has become better at **celebrating** successes.
- Increase the **information sessions**, e.g., financial planning.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- 1) **Promotion** of the community council. Denis will put this on the December agenda and one consideration is Public Service Announcements.
- 2) To establish a **chapter** for Family Voices the community council will contact Don Pottie.
- 3) To address **affordable housing** the community council will explore rent control and a subsidy that is attached to the person not the unit. Donna Desjardin will contact the MLA.
- 4) The community council will **increase communication** back to the partners and a plan for this will be brought to the community council.
- 5) The **turnover** and **wage** issues will be addressed through Workforce 2010.

St. Paul # 2

Members of the group: Karen Zalaski, Daniel Dejardins, Shaunette Duchesneau, Olga Jurak, Lori Letourneau, Randy Jacobson, Julie Pepin, Judy Pereplecta, Betty Rook, Don Rook, Sherry Young.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- While the Special Olympics has not connected with the pool, the SPAN Board has **subsidized** pool passes for people served.
- The pool took out **stairs**.
- There is now a reputable **taxi** service.
- More people have **jobs** and more are in **educational** opportunities.
- The seniors group is more included with other seniors groups and some have **memberships** with seniors clubs.
- An individual with a developmental disability is on the **Board** of SPAN.
- The Norm McLeod Award **winner** was from St. Paul.
- Community groups such as Curves and TOPS are more open to **inclusion**.
- Kids who were included in the Youth Bowling Council have now moved on to **regular** bowling leagues as adults.
- Special Olympics has **floor hockey** again.
- The town is **safer** and is growing.
- The **sidewalks** are better and there are more curb cuts.
- There is a **walking trail**.
- The new pool hall is clean and **safe**.
- There are new businesses and more **jobs**.
- Natural supports have **increased**.
- There is a new **chairperson** for the community council.
- The community council is bringing in **information** into the community about wills and estates, AISH, and there is more planned financial management.

What we would like to build on this year:

Housing: Accessible Affordable

- Find the **right person** to take on housing responsibilities such as getting information on mortgages and fixing up homes, rent to own options, getting research grants etc. All the group members will search for individuals and information and will report back. They will use the media and try to find banker friends.
- They want to follow up on the affordable housing committee by bringing this back to the community council. Lobby government for integrated housing and **join** with other groups concerned about the same issue.

Public Speaking

- The self advocates want to find out what happened to **Toastmasters** by finding out who was involved before and get them involved again.

Shopping and Services

- The group wants to create better **shopping** and **services** in the community. They all will bring the issues to the Chamber of Commerce and town council.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- Give the minutes and conference materials back to the community council within six weeks. They will then devise an **action plan** for the community council. Sherry Young will take the lead.

Fort McMurray #1

Members of the Group: Roxanne Hillier, Dot Anstey, Julie Cole, Gladys Bingham, Diana Cox, Cindy Orr, Shaun Murphy, Dion Ackerman, Jeannette Hillier, Christine McCarthy.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- One self advocate joined the **Keyano** program for singing.
- Some self advocates joined the writing program at **Keyano**.
- The **Centre of Hope** was opened to assist homeless people.
- Those involved in setting up a **community kitchen** moved away but they will try again.
- There is **yoga** once a month at Community Connections.
- Self advocates have become a **stronger group** in expressing their thoughts.
- Some attended **theatre** plays.

How the community is better

- There are more **job opportunities** for those wanting paid employment.
- There is lots of **volunteer work** for individuals.
- People are treated **equally**.
- They make sure that people are in **jobs** they enjoy and that suit them.
- Community agencies have facilitated job **placements**.
- **Community connections** have been made with agencies e.g., SPCA walking the dogs program.
- There is a **belief** in individuals.

What we are doing that is new

- Some people are **working** now.
- Individuals are joining **community activities**.
- Individuals are **participating** in fund raisers.
- Individuals are **participating** in self advocacy.
- There is independent **transportation**.
- The support staff are better **qualified**.
- There are more **recreation** opportunities via Kananaskis.
- Some are involved in **real estate** transactions.

What happened to get us started

- Increased **self-esteem** and taking time to make yourself better.
- The **encouragement** of others who believe in us results in a belief in yourself.
- We built more **friendships**.
- Good **support systems** were created.
- There was support for **networking** that created more opportunity.
- They found **community members** who share common goals.

What has made a difference in families and individuals lives

- Some **lost** loved ones and that brought the family closer.
- There was more **participation** in family activities.
- Finding new **supports**.
- Looking positively to the **future** but remembering the lessons of the past.
- Everyone working **together**.
- Recognizing each others **values**.
- More **financial stability** related to the work of self advocates and the community council.
- Joining and **participating** in community activities, e.g., self advocacy, community council, and Community Connections.

- Fort McMurray **housing** remains positive but has limited resources.

Things to build on in our community

- More **networking** amongst agencies.
 - We need a community directory to ensure distribution to all agencies.
 - Identify a central link to access pertinent information.
 - Hold an annual meeting of agencies.
 - Identify ‘community connectors’ and pass on this information to all staff, individuals and families.
 - Identify the best choice for helping an individual or a group.
 - Within six months specific agencies are to spearhead this.
- Starting a **community kitchen**.
 - Identify a location, i.e., a building.
 - Identify a user group.
 - Obtain facilitators.
 - Make a plan.
 - Ensure there are enough staff, volunteers and users.
 - Gladys and Niki Lou to lead within six months.
- Continuing to address **housing** concerns.
 - Continue the good relationship with Wood Buffalo Housing Authority.
 - Petition developers to set aside a portion of the development for social housing or people with developmental disabilities spread through the whole development.
 - Develop a relationship with the native band association.
 - Encourage a bartering system to improve conditions of some houses in poor condition.
 - Look at starting a Small Sparks project.
 - This is an ongoing effort in which all will participate.
- More advocacy by families and individuals for more funding for **consistency** and long term support workers.
 - Start in schools to increase community awareness.
 - Expand the self advocacy group to lobby government.
 - Develop an event to create awareness.
 - Connect people to Family Voices.
 - Work with other community groups for a united voice.
 - Encourage a ground swell of support by families and individuals writing letters to government.
 - More focus on the community council to send a message.
 - This is to be started within six months and will be ongoing.

Fort McMurray #2

Members of the group: Linda Rix, Phillip Mackin, Sylvia Butt, Etta Nicholson, Debbie Lebedinski, Rowena McCann.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- Several self advocates have connected with **Keyano** taking music and voice courses. Several are in the Write Break Program.
- The self advocates did a petition to advocate for **changes to AISH**. The community council also wrote a letter to push for changes to AISH and some have been made.
- There are now more services for **homeless** people. There is a shelter for daytime use that provides hot showers, laundry, a mailing address, drop-in services, onsite medical service and an employment service.
- The Hope Centre has continued to offer a **soup kitchen** and peer support to homeless people.
- There is a transportation **registry** for voluntary drivers.
- Specialized **transportation** has increased and there are more busses and drivers. Agencies worked to advocate for increased service although it is not completed.
- The community wanted a **community kitchen** but has not been able to get a location.

Other improvements/progress

- There is more community capacity for **employment** opportunities and better pay.
- More **housing** has been built but there are still long waiting lists. Some accessible housing is not truly accessible e.g., cupboards.
- There is increased **community awareness** regarding people with developmental disabilities who are more visible in the community. They are in paid employment and volunteer positions. A down side is the huge turnover in staff.
- STHT is helping the **hard to house** individuals get housing.
- Self advocates enhanced their **visibility** by getting more involved in their communities by volunteering.
- Families and individuals have identified **interests** and support staff have facilitated finding appropriate groups or organizations.
- Community agencies and government agencies are **working more closely together** and making better connections.
- The **job increases** happened because of the economic need but individuals have proven themselves to be valuable once given the opportunity.
- Most money goes out of Fort McMurray. People take their money out of town. Housing costs are too high.

The two Fort McMurray groups worked together on what they wanted to do over the next year.

Lac LaBiche #1

Members of the group: Patty Chisma, Linda Dwyer, Kathy Littlechilds, Jody Nicholson, Albert Cloutier.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- Last years goals were to spread the James Project (helping hands) to the other ten churches in Lac LaBiche and to establish a perennial exchange.
- A commitment was made by one church to do **roofing and re-grading** at a home where three individuals live.
- Contact has been made with the Muslim church and White Russian Orthodox church. This has been done through staff connections. Individuals are helping the churches through **volunteering** at the thrift shop and food bank. People with developmental disabilities are seen as helping out their community.
- The relationship between the churches and the community is very strong and has become a **reciprocal relationship**.
- The community continues to open up to people with developmental disabilities and there are continuous invitations to be **partners** in community projects and initiatives. Self advocates are seen as valued partners.
- **Training and employment** opportunities have increased.
- There is an interest by community members to sit on the service provider **Boards**.
- The employability program at **Portage College** has expanded the horizons to include people with developmental disabilities.
- A relationship has been established with the high school in relation to **transition planning** for students.
- There is more general **awareness** in the community about the potential for a good life and who to contact and where to go.
- Families are **connecting** with one another for support and to talk.
- Past champions now feel at ease to allow the community partners to continue to **progress**.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- 1) To make Portage College the **college of choice** for people with developmental disabilities to achieve their educational endeavours.
- 2) To promote the human service field as a valued **career**.

Action Plan Goal One

- The community council will connect with AACL to work on a **partnership** with Portage College that results in an inclusive post secondary option that

honours people with developmental disabilities. Lynda will put this goal on the community council agenda for November.

- The community council will make a **presentation** to Portage College regarding their desire to be potential students. The community council will contact Lori Skinner to assist them in developing a presentation.
- The community council will encourage Portage Collage to **attend** other community council meetings and make a presentation on their program.

Action Plan Goal Two

- To continue to **promote** the community rehabilitation field through all possible venues in the community.
- Provide **training** to community council members on presentation skills.
- The community council members will make presentations on the **importance** of support workers.
- School students will be **invited** to attend community council meetings.
- Have an **editorial** in the local paper about the lack of workers and what the field is about etc.
- Maintain continuous **informal connections**.

Lac LaBiche #2

Members of the Group: Colleen Huston, Amanda Woods, Yvette Crane, Joan Pattison, Donalda Toutant, Linda Ulliac.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- There are portable **ramps** for the bowling alley.
- There is a new **rug** for the office so that people do not trip.
- There is a **ramp** into the Post Office.
- Three **roofs** were replaced by helping hands through a connection with the Muslim church.
- Services have **expanded** and there are two new houses.
- The community is coming along with a greater **understanding** of disability.
- The first person with a developmental disability from Lac LaBiche is **studying** employment skills at Portage College.
- There is **accountability** on the Board.
- People are **accessing services** by word of mouth.
- Some are learning how to help people **navigate** the AISH system e.g., how to use joint accounts.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- Barrier free **transportation** in conjunction with partners AACL, AHRE and NEPDD by 2007 as this is huge problem in Lac LaBiche.

- More **housing** is needed and the goal is to get it by 2008. They want a realtor connected to the Real Estate Foundation.
- A wheelchair accessible **van** is a priority and \$38,000 has been raised toward it.
- A goal is to have one additional **house** to provide affordable housing.
- They need more **employment** in the community.

Cold Lake

Members of the group: Hansa Thelsavar, Nicki Turner, Sandy Turner, Nancy Schneider, Hannah Hatch, Madonna Linehan, Christine Cassie.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- The community council group hosted a community barbeque to attract **new members** to community council, new members attended.
- A **housing** umbrella group has been formed and will address the housing issues of a number of groups, crisis centre, seniors, low income individuals and individuals with disabilities.
- A number of new **jobs** have been created.
- Individuals with disabilities have **volunteered** in the community and have participated in community projects like the food drive, etc.
- Individuals have **volunteered** their time to do presentations to schools to discuss and increase awareness regarding disability.

How did we accomplish our goals?

- Years ago there was a move towards **integration** in the school system long before it was legislated and the community has accepted individuals with disabilities as part of their community as a result of this early move towards inclusion.
- We now have employers who have **experience** employing individuals who are spreading the word to other employers about the many benefits of employing individuals.
- We are known in our community through our **volunteering** and our presence in the workplaces in Cold Lake.
- There is **compassion** in Cold Lake for individuals with disabilities, as a result of relationships and connections.
- We have self-advocates and individuals who have more **confidence** and are better able to represent themselves.
- Community events **include everyone** as individuals are part of the community and the community is aware so they are included.

What we would like to focus on this year:

Our priorities are affordable housing, transportation, inclusion in community sports, more choices for sporting activities, post secondary education options and/or upgrading opportunities.

Action Plans:

Post Secondary Education Action Plan: The community council would like to host an information session regarding opportunities for post secondary education for community council representatives.

Transportation Action Plan: Goal: To restore the affordable transportation system to Cold Lake.

Step 1: Identify the groups that need to come together to discuss transportation and the need for transportation in the community.

Step 2: Review reports and studies i.e. the United Way needs assessment. There is also a transportation group active in Vegreville perhaps community council could meet with those individuals as well.

Step 3: Identify who are the supporters of the need for transportation and invite those people to attend a meeting to discuss transportation issues as well.

Step 4: Self advocates and others affected by transportation issues tell their stories to politicians, and groups.

Step 5 Circulate a Petition to present to the city.

Who is involved?

- the city
- the former transportation committee
- community council
- community service groups
- interagency group
- seniors groups
- community health and service providers
- schools

What are the barriers?

- the image
- lack of understanding of the issue regarding transportation
- getting information out to groups
- a multidisciplinary group speaking together as one voice

Who are the champions?

Self advocates, community council, and the premier's council on disability.

Timelines:

- At the next community council meeting in December the group will report regarding the conference action plan.

- The people first group will be invited to attend the December meeting to discuss the transportation issue.
- NEPDD rep will attend the meeting in December to assist with the creation of an action plan.

Bonnyville

Members of the group: JodyLyn Dunlop, Lawrence Noel, Lorie Skinner, Cam Fontain, Pearl Fontain, Lorna Storoschuk, Edward Rondeau, Rebecca Fritzler, Joshua Luyendyk, Leona Heisler, Tacey Murphy, Alex Hillyard.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

Using the media

- Members of the community council talked to the **media** and the MLA.
- Lawrence Noel now sits on the **Premier's Council**.
- There was an **article** in the media about the Northeast Conference award winners last year.
- The Dove Centre used the **newspaper** to identify employers in the community.
- The Minister's (Yvonne Fritz) visit to the community council to talk about AISH and affordable housing was **reported** in the paper.

What is better

- The Minister allocated funding to improve **housing**.
- Denis Ducharme brought the **caucus** to Bonnyville to meet with interest groups.
- Bonnyville is **connected effectively** with the media and government (MLA, Minister, and caucus). In particular the MLA has worked hard for the group. "He is very responsive to the community"

What has changed

- Funding for **housing** has started. There was an allocation of \$600,000 for affordable housing.
- The community now has an **awareness** of issues and is involved in the changes.
- Bonnyville now has some history, relationship and **connection** with the Minister.
- Bonnyville **participated** in the AISH review and saw the changes that they suggested.
- The amount of AISH was **increased**.
- The AISH office is no longer in Bonnyville but the community can talk to the Minister if issues arise.

What has made a difference in the past year in the lives of families and individuals

- The **AISH increase** has helped to pay the bills, particularly the rising utility bills.
- The AISH increase has improved **opportunities** for people to work, get an education or take training.
- The town has **hired** a person with a developmental disability.
- The increase in available **supports** (staff at Dove Centre) has increased employment for individuals.
- It is impressive that an employer gives an individual a **ride** to and from work.
- There is an employment appreciation **event** in the community that has raised awareness.
- The Northeast Conference awards raise **awareness** and representatives of Bonnyville are attending the Conference as well as receiving awards.
- There is a sense of **urgency**, one more year has gone by and there has not been enough of a change “for ourselves and our daughter”.
- Work is being done to support families concerned about **planning** for their sons and daughters when the parents are no longer there.

What we would like to focus on this year:

- A **committee** is developed to make decisions regarding the spending/building of the housing.
- We have moved from the first phase of securing funding to **building** the homes. There is a renewed sense of purpose.
- In the spring start **building** the housing project.
- All families with older adults (40+) have a **plan** in place that focuses on the individual, the family and their needs.
- Increase **attendance** at advocacy meetings such as the community council and workshops etc.
- Conduct an information and **awareness campaign** around the issue of older families and individuals.
- Establish a partnership with AACL, Edmonton Region and Calgary Region to focus on the **aging family** and their needs.
- Next year’s conference should focus on **family managed funds** and **planning** for older individuals.

Barrhead

Members of the group: Arlene Ehl, Andrew Dabels (presenting), Angie Chrysto, Des Hughes, Robert Love, Coryann Petryshen, Harold Saunders, Janet Semeniuk, David Wentworth Jodi Young, Steven Bala, Carrie Hamilton, Kim Knott, Andre Reneau, Denise Rubik, Jason Rubik, Justin Welt, Jillian White, Don Pottie.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

Transportation

- Volunteer **registry** is still at FCSS.
- Seniors group has a **van** which they can make available.
- Have a transportation **committee**.

Community Council

- Handed out **pamphlets** at IGA/ doctors offices/ car dealerships/ BHSSA.
- Meetings were promoted in the **paper**/ BHSSA newsletter.
- Two new dynamic **co-chairs** were elected and there is a new secretary.
- More people are **coming** to community council than last year.
- **New members** joined the community council by friends inviting them.

What's better than a year ago?

- Better **awareness** of housing and transportation issues in Barrhead.
- Klondike reflections – art work from individuals/community donated for fundraising for an **inclusive** art studio.
- Our library is becoming more **accessible** for everyone computers/internet, talking books, accessible entry/washroom.
- People **attending/participating** in the rodeo, homecoming, festivals, Blue Heron fair.
- **New people** in the community.
- **New jobs**.
- There is **growth/development** in Barrhead.
- Our Community Council is **growing** and we are excited about what we can accomplish together.
- Barrhead special Olympics bowling team **won** the provincials and are going to Manitoba in July 2006.
- There are new, accessible **walking trails**.
- The community council partnered with FCSS and People First to put together an **art book**.

What we would like to focus on this year:

Transportation

1. To get the bus we have back on the “road” again.
 - Who – the transportation group from community council.
 - When – invite FSCC to our next meeting (November 2005) – the transportation committee will contact the town of Barrhead and FCSS re: funding to cover the operating costs – they will also connect with other groups who need to access to an accessible vehicle.

- The group wants to be able to get around town or to Edmonton when they need/want to.

2. To make taxi service more affordable

- Who – transportation committee will contact FCSS to see if this is an issue for others in the community; ask for a community needs assessment; find more people who have this same issue

Housing

1. Create/Increase the housing available in Barrhead – more choices for individuals

- Bring the “Home” program **training** to Barrhead – Des will contact the housing society/FCSS/town to inform them of the program and see if they will host a session on the “Home” program by January of 2006 and report back to Community Council

New areas to explore

- Setting up a **community kitchen**.
- Developing a **community garden**.

Athabasca #1

Members of the group: Susan Moisey, Ken Anderson, Steve Hrachy, Doug Kariel, Heather Kariel, Beverly Webb, Simone Newberry, Alice Reid from Wabasca.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- The **food kitchen** over a period of a month had eighteen people prepared fourteen meals once per month for \$20. Next year there will be two groups.
- **Transportation** remains a problem, but the community council arranges or pays for transportation to meetings with the result that more people are attending. This is not really a solution for the community.
- The Friendly Greeting effort is **welcoming** to guests.
- There are opportunities for **volunteering** in taking care of animals.
- The **library** has started to be more inclusive. The Board chair and the librarian attended a PDD session on inclusion. The board decided to participate in the Inclusive Libraries Initiative.
- They **raised funds** for Special Olympics and they are going to Brandon for the nationals.
- As a result of a story in the newspaper there is changing awareness and **attitudes**.

- The community council provided information on UNESCO standards for **access** for people with disabilities to the Multiplex.
- The **school** is more supportive and two people with developmental disabilities graduated from high school. The school is more involved and the community council meetings are held in the school library.

A community council focus on education

- They are providing more **educational activities** (e.g., the RCMP talked about safety and insurance for tenants), the public guardian spoke on guardianship and trusteeship.
- More people are coming to the community council meetings and they are **invited** to two social events if they attend a community council meeting.
- There is a need to connect with individuals in surrounding areas such as Boyle.
- Fort McMurray workers are buying homes in Athabasca and it is more of a “**bedroom community**”. There are more service jobs but they require more training and experience than people with developmental disabilities have at present.

What helped with the Food Kitchen

- Maureen had the skill and knowledge and coordinated the efforts.
- FCSS administered the funding.
- The United Church stores the food and equipment.
- The community centre where the food is cooked charges \$90 per session.

What we would like to focus on this year:

Food Kitchen

- Continue to **expand** it. Steve and Simone
- Arrange for a **food handlers course** to get information, education, and certificates on food handling to help them get work. Simone by January 2006.
- Connect with **caterers** in the area. Steve.
- The **results** will be meeting more people and learning about shopping and nutrition.

Community Council

- **Expand** the membership of the community council. Doug and Arlene. Attract more community members and those in the surrounding areas.
- A **barrier** is that the group needs to know who PDD funds and there are confidentiality issues.
- **Strategies** include using the ‘Coming Events’ section in the newspaper, meeting in different locations, and holding an annual event such as a mini-conference.

Increase Volunteering

- Establish a volunteer **registry** and look at others as examples.
- There are **opportunities** with veterinarians, the hospital, lodges, Extencicare, a link with the library, women's auxiliary, FCSS, and the Friendship Centre.
- Request community capacity **funds** to get started on developing a volunteer registry. The group will need a partner to apply.

Athabasca #2

Members of the group: Suzan Slootweg, Arlene Brost, Debra Flett, Linda Nadeau, Brenda Johnson, Brenda Turton, Michael Mountford, Margaret Parker.

What we have accomplished over the last year?

- The **community kitchen** was established.
- In the area of **transportation** more people are using taxis.
- Some people are working with **animals**.
- With **employment** more employers are open to jobs and volunteer positions.
- More people are **living on their own** with minimal support and there is more community involvement.
- There are more people attending the **community council** where they get free food, have time with friends, increase awareness, and have learning opportunities.
- There is a **mentor** at school and a volunteer with the Native Friendship Centre.
- **Peer support** has increased and the service provider is encouraging a peer support group.
- There is new **leadership** in the community council.
- There are several **stories** on line.
- Some **athletes** are going to Brandon for the Special Olympics.
- More people are using **natural supports** in the community and are included in groups such as toastmasters, curves, and pottery club without staff support.
- More people's **stories** are on the Northeast Community Online website.

What we would like to focus on this year:

Transportation

- Advertise and **recruit** in the community: Taxi owners, bus company, community council, town and county councils, FCSS, seniors, mayor, service organizations, service providers.
- Establish a **committee** by March 2006.

- Community council to take the **initiative** to recruit a bus (mini or school) that would serve the whole community.
- Seek **cooperation** by those organizations with larger vans.
- A **needs survey** will be done by the committee to see who is interested and willing to pay by February 14, 2006.
- Arrange for a **grant** by January 30, 2006. examine all available sources for funds.
- The survey and report is to be **completed** by March 31, 2006.
- Look at **similar communities** that have transportation.
- Gain the momentum and support from **stakeholders**.
- To continue to support the **Community Kitchens** project by increasing awareness of the project and applying for community capacity funds when possible.

Community Council

- Increase the **awareness** of the community council.
- Use a facilitator to establish a **mission** and **goals** for the year.
- Create **objectives** and **timelines** for the next twelve months.

XIII. CONFERENCE CLOSING

Iris Pasarino thanked Geoff Wright on behalf of the committee for his role as chair of the community council and the planning committee for the 2005 Northeast Conference.

Don Schultz thanked all the facilitators for assisting the community groups.