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Annual Report 2017



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A message from the President

By Leonard Lozowy

This past year continued with more changes. After 17 months on the job as our Executive Director, Brooks Hanewich left Gateway on November 10th, 2017. Christine Spottiswood, a 6 year employee of Gateway with an excellent financial background, was selected to be the Interim Executive Director until our permanent Executive Director was hired. On March 26th, Sahana Parameswara started as our new Executive Director.

In addition to the leadership changes, our building lease at our 184th Street office was ending at the end of March 2018 and it was decided that we would look for a more central, more accessible location. The search started right after our AGM a year ago. After a few months of searching and weighing the costs and benefits it was decided that Gateway Association would be moving to our present location at #201, 10941 – 120th Street. Many organizations stepped forward with in kind donations of labor or materials for the new location, moving costs, furniture donations, etc. This was greatly appreciated.

2017 was also full of some unfortunate changes after the unanticipated loss of some significant grants and funding which meant that in order to balance the 2018 budget, the board was presented with difficult decisions. Employee wages account for 70% of the 2018 approved budget. It meant that early in 2018, four talented employees lost their jobs. We are very grateful for their contributions and for being part of the Gateway family.

The remaining staff have secure funding and contracts in place for the work that they are doing in the key areas of Employment and Family Support. Unfortunately, there is a significant wait list for the job seekers supported by Gateway. With additional grants and funding, we hope that the waiting list can be reduced or eliminated sooner rather than later.

With a new Executive Director, a new office location, new direction, new possibilities and an outlook to a brighter future, we will continue to transform our communities so all people are valued, respected members of our society.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

The Gateway Association was able to start the 2017 fiscal year from a position of financial strength. Starting from a position of strength, afforded the association flexibility as well as the ability to change course as necessary. From a financial perspective, the organization had a strong sense of what 2017 was going to bring and was able to present a balanced budget. Fortunately, our expectations were realized and our actual financial results were effectively balanced.

The unknown in early 2017 was “what will the 2018 year bring.” With the turning of the calendar the year became much clearer. A number of key grants were concluded, reducing the organization’s funding by approximately \$250,000. In addition, with organization’s move to our new location, funds were spent related to the design and renovation of the new space. Fortunately, Gateway was able to start the year from a position of strength allowing the organization to adapt and make changes, as necessary.

To improve our liquidity, the organization was able to secure funding from the Social Enterprise Fund to cover the majority of the costs associated with the new location. The organization will be funded \$217,000, repayable at a rate of 5% simple interest over a 10 year period.

The second course of action, was to address the budgeted revenue shortfall. To this end, the organization was forced to take a hard look at its spending. To balance the budget for 2018, the organization made the difficult decision to part ways with a number of team members.

With 2018 well underway, Gateway was once again able to start the year in a position of financial strength. Allowing Gateway to continue to service the community now and into the future.

VOLUNTEERS – Thank you!

To all of our wonderful volunteers who have supported us this past year by generously donating their time to our charity Casino and other events – Thank You!

Allan Robertson	Bobbi Killian	Greg Morrison	Richard Preston
Allyson Lawrie-White	Brooks Hanewich	Ian Meier	Ron Zirzinger
Amy Park	Catherine Kelm	Jim Mancini	Sandra Zilka
Amy Quintal	Christine Spottiswood	Jolanta Vermette	Sarah Preston
Andrew Dalwood	Cindy de Bruijn	Katey Zilka	Shane Zilka
Ashleigh Benson	Dale Fetterly	Keri McEachern	Shelley Veats
Audrey Glavin	David Jardine	Kim Reschenthaler	Shirley Hall
Aysha McRorie-Moreau	David Veats	Leonard Lozowy	Sydney Carriere
Barb Oseemeemow	Doug Spottiswood	Mariette Stad	Tom Zilka
Barb Pearce	Filomena Traficante	Matthew Storey	Vickie Mancini
Betty Hahn-Sidor	Florence Burton	Michael Blanchard	Winston Fisher
Bill Mitchell	Frances Preston	Nicole Hill	Yonique Ritch
	Glenn Havinga	Oxanna Lozowy	

FAMILY SUPPORT:

In the last year, Family Support has heard from many parents who are finding it challenging to receive enough support especially in Family Managed Services. Families of children who have transitioned from high school to adult services are not receiving supports that once school time provided, with some receiving as little as two hours of support a week. A lack of openings with service providers has meant families are having to take on more responsibilities, with the risk of quitting their jobs or working less in order to provide support for their adult children. Many other calls included individuals themselves living with a developmental disability having difficulty finding housing. The team provides the best information and advocacy to families we can prior to negotiating their FMS contract renewals. Along with providing support, information to community resources to newcomer families, other inquiries continue to include Guardianship, Trusteeship, AISH, RDSP and the Disability Tax Credit. Family Support continues to respond to requests from Disability Services caseworkers and Alberta Supports for resources and supports.

Our team are experts in working with families to write Individual Support Plans - meeting individuals, families, and their supports and Disability Services caseworkers. These meetings are intense for all present to create a vision for the future, goals and strategies for each person receiving funding. We began to collaborate with Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) to provide the same support for those under the age of 18. And to offer families more support, Gateway holds 12 Families Forward meetings in a year with topics that inspire, encourage and give families a space and time to share their personal stories.

In addition to ISP's, the Family Support Team has continued providing workshops for families transitioning a child to adult services and to families pursuing Family Managed Services for their loved ones. Gateway offered over twenty-five workshops in 2017 alone, and in response to workshop evaluations, some workshops have been renamed and reworked to meet families' expectations. We also offer information sessions on transitioning to adulthood for students and parents transitioning out of high school, and the Family Support team has attended several high school's fairs where students are transitioning out of high school.

Family Support was fortunate to have two practicum students who became enmeshed into the values of Gateway. One student from the Faculty of Human Ecology and the other from Denmark from the faculty of Social Work. At the beginning of 2018 two new but very experienced facilitators will be presenting Gateways workshops to families.

EMPLOYMENT:

Even though there have been significant staffing changes, the employment team has continued to work with as many job seekers as possible in the areas of exploration, job search and job maintenance. Employment continues to have a growing waitlist getting numerous calls from families, job seekers, other agencies and a variety of professionals.

2017 saw 81 job seekers employed. We saw the success of the Transition Support Program pilot when we worked with students, who live with Autism, transitioning from school to employment. We met with them for a detailed transition planning session that sought to explore their intentions and the best path to help them reach their goals. After this, they had the opportunity to transition into our Employment Program. From this program it became clearer that there is an overwhelming need for students to gain more meaningful work experience. This lead to the start of the Work Experience Pilot which started last year, running through to August 2018.

We continued to work with youth in care through our various partnerships with Chimo, Catholic Social Services and Unlimited Potential. Gateway organized the first ever National Cash Mob, with partner agencies in both Ottawa and Halifax; participated in the Disability Employment Awareness Month Cash Mob; and organized another cash mob to support an inclusive employer.

We held the 2017 Mayors Luncheon that featured a key note speaker from RBC and saw mayors and politicians from all over the province in attendance. Our Employment team presented at various conferences and universities including: CASE national conference, McMan's 'In our Community' Conference, the University of Alberta and MacEwan University. We continue to work on our partnerships with the City of Edmonton, the City of St Albert, Pan Disability Connection, Job Developer's Group, Shift, BadaB Consulting and Alberta Health Services.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES:

2017 was a busy year! In August Gateway Association's newsletter went fully digital with the first edition of the Gateway Newser. Gateway's social media presence grew by more than 100 followers on both Facebook and Twitter, which means more people see our news and events and are eager to communicate and network with us.

We continued to refine our use of the Google Ad Grants program which provides free money every month to use towards Google Adwords. This program has increased traffic to our website and improved our online presence which has been a huge step for Gateway.

We made new connections in Kenora, and Ottawa Ontario for the We Belong Inclusive Employer app, which means more Canadians can view which of their local businesses are hiring inclusively, and the first and second issues of our digital magazine *thelens* were released to great reviews. The first edition was all about collaboration, and the second focused on using data to measure and improve community impact.

Gateway had the opportunity to work with the CSL program at the U of A, which consists of six groups of students presenting projects on different strategies Gateway could use to improve communications. At least one of the student ideas was adopted and will likely be implemented in 2018!

Gateway also began refreshing and revamping its website www.gatewayassociation.ca to make the site more user friendly for people who need our information and resources.