



Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports

Annual Report

December 17, 2020





Mission

Through independent facilitation we walk alongside people with developmental disabilities and those they trust to inspire them to think about what they want and to take action as citizens in their neighbourhoods and community.

Vision

Contributions, Citizenship, and Freedom for People with Developmental Disabilities.

Values

Community is the first resource so that people see the community as a place to start in becoming participating, valued, contributing citizens.

The expertise of people with disabilities and their families, friends, and allies is acknowledged so that people with disabilities and their families, friends, and allies define what they want and what works best for them.

People have control over their lives so that people are able to choose what “a good life” means to them and have control over their information, funding, and support that moves with them and enables them to live that life.

Community solutions are innovative and creative so that, like the rest of us, people with disabilities can forge their own path in the community rather than being ‘plugged into’ what already exists.

Separating the functions in a transformed system are promoted providing individualized support dollars and separating the functions of independent facilitation and planning; service delivery; and autonomous groups are essential to people having control of their lives.

Acknowledgements and Appreciations

Our year in review begins with our profound thanks for the many talented people who contribute to Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports.

Throughout a year of organizational change, pandemic outbreak, and unpredictable shifts in society, the Board of Directors continued to ground the work of Brokerage.

As parents of adult sons who live with disabilities, Chris McCandless and Maria Ala continued to enrich Board discussions by sharing their lived experience and speaking to what it takes for people to have choice and what it means for people to live full, meaningful lives in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Informed by their respective experiences in and vast knowledge of the legal and corporate world, Mason Herberholz and Paul Fulton continued to lend their valuable expertise to Brokerage. Their clarity, sound judgments, and practicality are integral to meaningful Board dialogue and decision-making.

As long-time Board members, Milt Byrd, Darlene Byrd, and Debbie Desjardins continued to serve as pillars of the spirit and work of Brokerage. Milt's candidness and composure ground Board discussions in the practical, day-to-day experiences of people and families. Darlene's keen eye and sharp focus ensure that no detail goes unchecked. As our treasurer and secretary, Debbie promotes reason and fiscal prudence, while leveraging her passion for community to keep Brokerage informed and to inspire action.

We are grateful for Carole Behrens's service as our vice-president and for her inquisitive mind. Carole's insights and questions ensure that there is common understanding among all Board and team members.

We were blessed with another year of Marleen's stalwart leadership. As our Board President, Marleen continued to hold the threads of Brokerage's history, purpose, and future vision, dedicating her time and her wisdom in pursuit of broad social change for people living with disabilities.

We wish to thank the staff, self-employed independent facilitators, graphic facilitators, and people and families for their courage and loyalty through an unpredictable year. In serving together, we were able to forge ahead into the changing landscape of our world, and, together, we will continue to grow into the future.

Thank you to our partners - Windsor-Essex Family Network, Community Living Windsor, St. Francis Advocates, Family Services Windsor-Essex, the City of Windsor, the My Home, My Choice group, the local Microboard working group, the Equal Right to Decide group, Pooran Law, and the Ontario Independent Facilitation Network (OIFN) – who remain open to and committed to finding common ground and taking positive, possible steps forward together, so that people and families have the freedom and support to make decisions and live ordinary, everyday lives in neighbourhoods and communities of their own choosing.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS), and, particularly, for the guidance and support of our Program Supervisor, Derek Nardini.

Governance

Throughout 2020, the Board of Directors continued to make informed decisions regarding policy, oversight, and execution of Brokerage's mission and vision. The Board invested great effort and thought into Brokerage's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting Brokerage to continue operations without any interruption to facilitation supports. The Board continued to consider and pursue opportunities for community outreach and capacity development and broader social impact.

Throughout the year, the Board engaged in diligent review of and fulsome discussions around ethical standards, risk management approaches, and policy and procedure updates, prudently responding to changes to laws, regulations, and employment standards.

All financial responsibilities were undertaken according to best practice methods and reviewed on a regular basis. Ongoing, open dialogue with third-party financial services continued as an essential safeguard and accountability measure, which included thorough review of budgets, financial reports, and opening and closing of the books. All ongoing monthly, annual, and other audited statements were thoroughly examined by the Board.

Our Work in Service of People and Families

People who live in Windsor and Essex county, along with their family members and/or loved ones, continued to show great strength, courage, creativity, and flexibility. This year presented new challenges, as people and families were obliged to work through support changes caused by the COVID-19 shutdown. Despite these setbacks, people and families continued to share learning and find creative solutions, inspiring us with their resilience and significant investments of time and energy, so that people can experience rich, meaningful lives as full citizens.

In February 2020, Brokerage hosted a Resilient Leadership Retreat, facilitated by Lynda Kahn and Jack Pearpoint of Inclusion Press. Expanding upon meaningful discussions and reflections from previous strategic planning sessions, we were inspired by stories about "1000 cups of tea," which demonstrated the power of conversations and connections in creating change. We

outlined next steps to achieve a vision where people experience freedom, belong, are known, and make a difference in their neighbourhoods and communities. Although this work was put on pause as a result of COVID-19, we are committed to exploring opportunities in the next year to take up the action steps that were identified, including hosting a world café to bring together new and existing allies and influencing post-secondary education opportunities.

Leadership and Engagement

In a year where virtual connections became more important than ever, Brokerage remained committed to broader reach and impact, continuing to leverage our investment in our online presence; following the re-design of the Brokerage website in 2019, we continued to keep the website updated, particularly adding useful resources and offering a platform for people in our neighbourhoods and communities and beyond to find good information.

Similarly, in January 2020, Brokerage moved our files over to a cloud-based system, which proved to be a very timely transition, allowing staff to access resources and, when needed, work remotely with full capability.

Although COVID-19 presented many burdens to overcome, we also recognized and took the opportunity to reflect on existing systems and practices and consider and promote change. For example, in May 2020, Brokerage urged the Ministry to consider exceptions to Passport funding restrictions, in order to accommodate the impacts of COVID-19 on the daily lives of people and families. Many exceptions for Passport have since been released, and we are seeing continued flexibility to support people and families to maintain some quality of life as the pandemic continues to impact our neighbourhoods and communities.

Brokerage also participated in bi-weekly meetings of the Tri-County Adult Developmental Services Provider Committee to ensure good information exchange.

In the next fiscal year, Brokerage will continue to consider broad possibilities for connection, growth, and learning. As the Ministry seeks to engage stakeholders and inform transformation of Developmental Services, we will continue to elevate the voices of people and families and uphold the important role of Independent Facilitation in strengthening people and their loved ones to direct their lives, take action, and experience the same freedoms, responsibilities, and opportunities as any other citizen.

Shared Learning and Collective Change

Our commitment to change and leading-edge practices is driven by our community partnerships, through which we deepen our knowledge, respond to the needs of people and families, and work together to build a resilient community.

Brokerage continued to partner with Windsor-Essex Family Network to host various educational events, including the Navigating High School Inspiration Night event, which was adapted to an online format and included inspiring presentations by people and family members and time for

questions and answers. Moreover, efforts were made to collate, review, and share electronic resources, in place of the resource table and information binders that are usually distributed at the in-person event.

WEBPS continued to contribute to the My Home, My Choice committee, which explores possibilities for individualized housing solutions, so that people may be supported to live in homes of their own choosing. In April 2020, the federal and provincial governments announced the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), designed to increase access to affordable housing by providing portable funding to off-set rental costs. While Brokerage has supported people to apply for this benefit, we look forward to learning more as the government moves to implementation. As more information emerges about this and other housing benefits, the My Home, My Choice committee will consider future opportunities to educate and support people to secure affordable, independent living arrangements in the neighbourhoods of their choice.

As the lead for transitional planning for youth who live with a disability, Brokerage continued to connect with young people interested in planning for the future. In partnership with the Greater Essex County District School Board, Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, Family Respite Services, and MCCSS, Brokerage hosted the annual Planning for Success - Life after High School event. Moving from in-person to online delivery, a virtual information series was held weekly over the month of October, highlighting information, resources, and opportunities for people and families on a variety of topics, including Housing and Finances, Education and Employment, Assistive Technology, and Recreation and Leisure.

Work continues on the provincial Equal Right to Decide Project, formerly titled the Supports to Decision-making Project, led by Community Living Ontario, along with Michael Bach from the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS) and Pooran Law. Windsor is one of five pilot sites, along with Dryden, Toronto, Brockville, and Oshawa. Working closely with Community Living Windsor, the local lead for this project, Brokerage has invested significant time and effort into shaping the project objectives. Without any concrete news on funding for this project, we await details on available resources that are required for Brokerage to contract with a facilitator to do this work, which seeks to educate others and influence change on legal capacity in Ontario, moving toward legalization of supported decision-making, as an alternative to guardianship.

In February 2020, Brokerage hired a facilitator to begin work under Brokerage's Memorandum of Agreement with Community Living Windsor to support people who are looking to move out of group homes. Unfortunately, this work was put on pause in March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. We anticipate finding ways to move forward with this work in the next year. In addition, CLW has requested support of Brokerage to facilitate a process with people who attended Day Programs to explore options and leverage the available resources to customize their supports.

We continued to work collaboratively with the Ontario Independent Facilitation Network (OIFN) to promote Independent Facilitation and the contribution this support can make to people in strengthening their voices, claiming their power, creating change, and living full lives in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities. On behalf of Brokerage, Colleen Mitchell joined the OIFN Stewards in April 2020, contributing to OIFN's tremendous work in the past year to clarify its vision, mission, and core beliefs and invest in three key priorities, including engaging and strengthening the OIFN community of practice, re-building and supporting Independent Facilitation across the province, and increasing visibility and accessibility of Independent Facilitation for people and families who want it. OIFN has taken significant strides to achieve these goals, hosting a series of online Reflective Practice Conversations, re-launching the Independent Facilitator Listings on oifn.ca, and investing resources into the development of the *Building Capacity in Independent Facilitation Shared Learning Series*. The first of five courses launched in November 2020, and the series will extend into the spring of 2021.

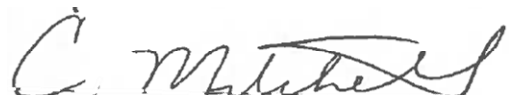
Moving Forward Together

We reflect on this year of unpredictability, growth, and change, and we celebrate the unshakeable strength and determination of people and families, our loved ones and friends, and our partners and community members. It is our distinct honour to serve bravely alongside you, and we look ahead to the next year with hope and renewed passion.

Respectfully submitted,



Domenic D'Amore, Executive Director



Colleen Mitchell, Associate Director

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"Real change,
enduring change,
happens
one step at a time."

RUTH BADER GINSBURG



Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports

Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2020

These figures have been extracted from the Auditors' Report and Financial Statements prepared by Baker Tilly Windsor LLP, dated August 17, 2020.

Please contact Domenic D'Amore, Executive Director, with any questions.

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WINDSOR ESSEX BROKERAGE FOR PERSONAL SUPPORTS**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS****YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2020**

	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Provincial grants	\$ 369,709	\$ 856,472
Fees	<u>438,482</u>	<u>348,582</u>
	<u>808,191</u>	<u>1,205,054</u>
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	65	500
Bookkeeping and administration	-	8,082
Computer software	7,252	10,587
Fringe benefits	35,701	39,974
Insurance	5,226	9,926
Pension	14,712	16,898
Professional services	10,788	13,212
Purchased services	250,215	305,450
Rent	27,633	25,544
Repairs and maintenance	6,246	6,119
Salaries	306,928	395,781
Staff training	4,929	27,827
Staff travel	8,051	11,796
Supplies	61,559	59,205
Transportation	19,092	103,469
Utilities and taxes	<u>13,936</u>	<u>19,087</u>
	<u>772,333</u>	<u>1,053,457</u>
REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	<u>35,858</u>	<u>151,597</u>
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING	<u>563,522</u>	<u>411,925</u>
NET ASSETS, ENDING	<u>\$ 599,380</u>	<u>\$ 563,522</u>

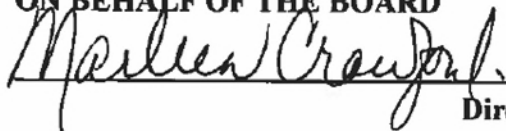
WINDSOR ESSEX BROKERAGE FOR PERSONAL SUPPORTS

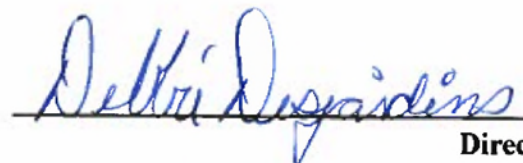
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

MARCH 31, 2020

	2020	2019
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ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 633,735	\$ 644,624
Accounts receivable	9,199	25,160
Prepaid expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>14,046</u>
	<u>\$ 642,934</u>	<u>\$ 683,830</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued charges (note 3)	\$ 43,554	\$ 99,210
Deferred revenue (note 4)	<u>-</u>	<u>21,098</u>
	<u>43,554</u>	<u>120,308</u>
NET ASSETS		
UNRESTRICTED	<u>599,380</u>	<u>563,522</u>
	<u>\$ 642,934</u>	<u>\$ 683,830</u>

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD


Director


Director