

institution watch

PEOPLE
FIRST
of CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
du CANADA



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
L'INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.

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Monitoring the progress toward a vision of full community living for *all* persons with intellectual disabilities.

This is a newsletter written and produced by the People First of Canada CACL Joint Task Force on Deinstitutionalization. For more information, contact Don Gallant at 416-661-9611 or Shelley Fletcher at 204-784-7362.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE

Norm McLeod and Gordon Fletcher, Co-Chairs



As co-chairs of the CACL PFC Joint Task Force on Deinstitutionalization we are very pleased to advise that the Task Force has been relaunched and is once again active. Both the Canadian Association for Community Living and People First of Canada have confirmed that continued efforts toward full deinstitutionalization in Canada remains one of their highest priorities, and as such have reestablished the Joint Task Force.

Both the CACL and PFC believe that people with an intellectual disability must have the support they need to live in community, and that people with an intellectual disability have the right to live in community. Confinement to life in an institution is a violation of that fundamental right. As we move forward, this Task Force will undertake activities and efforts that will hopefully lead to the closure of all institutions in Canada that specifically house persons with an intellectual disability.

While there are still large institutions remaining in Canada - most notably Manitoba Developmental Centre (MB) and Michener Centre (AB) - in this edition we wish to focus on the recent successful closure of Valley View Centre in Saskatchewan. The intended closure of Valley View was originally announced by the Government of Saskatchewan in 2012, and in September 2019, the closure was finally achieved. The Task Force extends congratulations to all those involved in this process and commends them for undertaking the person centered planning that is so essential to assisting persons to reclaim their right to live in community. We commend both government and community representatives for having the courage to do the right thing!

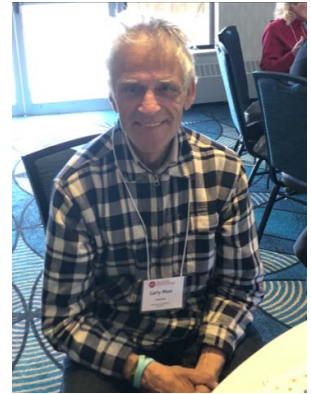
The closure process in Saskatchewan was well designed and successfully implemented. We hope the success of the Valley View closure will now serve as an imperative and a model for use in both Manitoba and Alberta.

“An institution is any place in which people who have been labeled as having an intellectual disability are isolated, segregated and/or congregated. An institution is any place in which people do not have, or are not allowed to exercise, control over their lives and their day to day decisions. An institution is not defined merely by its size.”

Successful Return to Community

LARRY MOSS

Larry chose to move to Saskatoon so that he could be closer to his family. He has spent lots of quality time with them whether it be going camping, fishing or out for coffee. He enjoys his house where there is lots of room to display his large collection of dvd's as well as all the trophies and medals he has collected over the years. Larry enjoys talking about his life in the community and has spoke at various events such as the Inclusion Saskatchewan Inclusion Breakfast as well as at self advocacy workshops.



SERENA BERNGES

Serena moved to Regina where she wanted to live in a place without roommates, she lives by herself with the assistance of her supports. She has taken up a new found love of art classes, loves to shop and go out to movies. She enjoys socializing in the warm weather by having tea and visits out on the deck with her neighbors. Serena was invited to speak to the Kinesiology students at the University of Regina about moving out of Valley View Centre as well as living with an Intellectual disability. She is proud of her independence and her house. She enjoys having people for a coffee and a visit and is a great host.



JANE WHITSON

Jane moved into the community of Moose Jaw. She loves shopping for the latest fashions -- especially nice shirts and sparkly purses. She has attended events at the legislature in Regina with Inclusion Saskatchewan and enjoys sharing and advocating for herself and others. Jane enjoys having people over for coffee and a visit and is very proud of her home.



A Historic Step Forward

The final two residents transitioned from Valley View Centre to their community home on September 24, 2019. This represents the culmination of countless hours of time, effort, meetings and planning, since the closure project was announced in February of 2012. Throughout the project there were many learnings, but at the core of all decision making were the needs of the individuals and their person-centered plans. The outcomes of all of the planning and transitions have been considered an overwhelming success. This could not have been achieved without the efforts of staff, community partners, families and stakeholders who were committed to the best interests and needs of the individuals as they transitioned to their new community homes.

Terry Hardy, Director, Program and Operational Support, CLSD, Ministry of Social Services

My last visit to the Valley View Centre (VVC) was on Tuesday September 24th, 2020. I will never forget watching the van drive away with the last two residents of the VVC leaving towards their new home in the community. The VVC closure was one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences I have ever had or will ever have. It was a privilege to be involved and to see the benefits and outcomes that resulted from the sincere collaboration between the Valley View Centre Family Group (VVCFG), the Government of Saskatchewan, and Inclusion Saskatchewan. There is truly nothing like seeing individuals transition into new homes and then go on to thrive in their new respective communities. It's a result that makes all of the hard work so very worthwhile. Also, I'd like to highlight the commitment and dedication of the family representatives (VVCFG), the Ministry of Social Services management and staff, Inclusion Saskatchewan board and staff and many other key stakeholders. All the parties were in line with each other working towards the same goal through many barriers and challenges.

Kevin McTavish, Executive Director, Inclusion Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan-made closure of Valley View Centre is a historic step forward for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We've showed that it is possible, that this kind of thing can be done, and that there is no reason why anyone should be living in an institution. It's undeniable that there is a revolution developing in our province – a revolution towards inclusion.

Gloria Mahussier, President of Inclusion Saskatchewan

Although this has taken a long time, it's important to have safe, person-centered plans for every single person, and that takes time. We applaud the Saskatchewan government for their commitment to this closure. To all the people who have joined life in the community over the past 7 years – welcome home!

Kory Earle, President, People First of Canada

The CACL & PFC Joint Task Force on Deinstitutionalization

Vision: A Canada where all people labelled with an intellectual disability have the support needed to live in community and not in an institution.

Mission: To close all institutions in Canada that specifically house people labeled with an intellectual disability.

Purpose

- To share information with decision makers at federal and provincial levels of government to draw their attention to the violation of human rights of people labelled with an intellectual disability; and demand appropriate supports be developed to enable people to live inclusive lives in the community
- To gather and share information with member organizations and with federal and provincial levels of government on best practices which support people to live inclusive lives
- To call on governments to meaningfully involve people labelled with an intellectual disability, their families, Associations for Community Living and People First Chapters in the review, planning and development of policies and funding models that have the potential to impact their lives.
- To offer expertise and advice to governments (at all levels), and our respective members, on the need to close institutions and to develop individualized supports and funding methods that enable people to live inclusive lives.
- To collaborate and share information with international organizations that advocate for the closure of institutions and the development of supports that enable people to live inclusive lives.
- Provide input to the Canadian Human Rights Commission in their role as the domestic monitoring system for the CRPD.
- To monitor activities at a national and P/T level as related to Canada's compliance with Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Call For Contributions

We encourage you to submit stories, Provincial/Territorial updates, pictures and/or personal perspectives on this issue. Please send all contributions directly to Don Gallant at dgallant@nl.rogers.com for publication in our next edition.