



54th Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

Annual Report



*Supporting the abilities and contributions
of persons with special needs
through a professional, caring and inspired team*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 12, 2007
120 Canby Street, Port Robinson

AGENDA

1. Welcome from President Carolynne Canham 5:00 p.m.
2. Adoption of the Minutes of September 26, 2006 Page 3
3. Adoption of the President's Report..... Page 5
4. Adoption of the Chief Executive Officer's Report Page 6
5. FINANCIAL:
 - .1 Adoption of the Auditor's Report & Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year 2006-07
 - .2 Appointment of the Auditors for the Fiscal Year 2007-08
6. Approval of the Actions of the Board of Directors for the Fiscal Year 2006-07
7. Report of the Nominating Committee..... Page 8
8. Closing RemarksAndrew Lewis
9. Adjournment

MINUTES

Annual General Meeting—September 26, 2006

Mr. Geoff Harvey, 1st vice president, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and welcomed approximately eighty members and guests to the 53rd Annual General Meeting of Niagara Support Services. This year's celebration was held in conjunction with the NTEC Annual Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, September 26, 2006, under the tent at the John Brennan Building, 120 Canby Street, Port Robinson, Ontario.

All voting members received a folder that included the NSS Annual Report, financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2006, a voting member card, and a list of NTEC award recipients.

Geoff Harvey introduced Rebecca DesRoches, program supervisor for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), who conveyed greetings on behalf of MCYS as well as the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Geoff then introduced Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Andrew Lewis, who acknowledged guests Mr. Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, manager of children's services, Regional Municipality of Niagara, and Mr. Garry Laws, former NSS-NTEC CEO and current chief operating officer for Bethesda.

Geoff Harvey and Andrew Lewis presented the following NSS awards:

- FRIEND OF NSS..... Ronald and Marina Barwell
- COMMUNITY SERVICE..... Bob Gale, Gales Gas Bars Limited
- CORPORATE TEAMWORK .. Oakwood Park Lodge (accepted by Director of Care, Janis Carson)
- PARTNER IN SERVICE..... Raymonde Masson, MDS Laboratories

NTEC Chair, Mr. Joe Mergl, and Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Andrew Lewis, presented the following NTEC awards:

- COMMUNITY SERVICE..... Holy Rosary Church (accepted by Milena Cappellaro)
- CORPORATE TEAMWORK .. Corporation of the City of Thorold (accepted by Kristin Dobbie)
- PARTNER IN SERVICE District School Board of Niagara (accepted by Principal, Ed Goerzen)

Moved by Mr. Gary W. Gunning, seconded by Ms. Claudia Valle, to adopt the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of September 22, 2005.

All in favour – Carried.

Moved by Ms. Laurali Whitby, seconded by Mr. Mark Venzon, to accept the President's Report as written and presented.

All in favour – Carried.

Mr. Mike Root of Durward Jones Barkwell & Company presented the auditor's report and financial statements for the fiscal year 2005-06.

Moved by Mr. Gary W. Gunning, seconded by Mrs. Elinor King, to accept the audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2005-06 as presented.

All in favour – Carried.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Moved by Mrs. Patricia Patterson, seconded by Ms. Joyce Bellefleur, to approve the actions of the Board of Directors for the fiscal year 2005-2006.

All in favour – Carried.

Moved by Ms. Judy Reid, seconded by Mr. Gary W. Gunning, to appoint the firm of Durward Jones Barkwell & Company as our auditors for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

All in favour – Carried.

Past President, Judy Reid, provided the Nominating Committee Report, presenting a slate of directors for 2006-07 and 2007-08, which comprised Beverley Allan, Carolynne Canham, and Jane Gouck. There were no nominations from the floor.

Moved by Ms. Laurali Whitby, seconded by Mrs. Christina Deschamps, to adopt the slate of directors for 2006-07 and 2007-08 as presented.

All in favour – Carried.

Judy Reid introduced the entire Board of Directors for 2006-07, including herself: Beverley Allan, Carolynne Canham, Maureen Connolly, Gary W. Gunning, Geoff Harvey, Elinor King, Jane Gouck, Claudia Valle, and Mark Venzon. The officers will be elected at the first meeting of the new Board of Directors on Tuesday, October 24, 2006, and will be announced in an upcoming bulletin.

Acting Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Lewis, provided the closing remarks by talking about "Leading With Our Hearts as well as Our Heads". He noted Helen Keller's quotation on this evening's awards, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." Andrew expressed that he was struck by how it captured what he has been feeling both personally and professionally over the past few months since his appointment as Acting Chief Executive Officer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

(A full transcript of Andrew's message to the membership was included in the October 2006 edition of Grapevine.)





Report from the President

On March 31, 2007, Niagara Support Services completed its 54th year. The newly minted saying, "60 is the new 40", could explain the reason that we are not feeling our age. The agency continues to be energetic and motivated in its quest to serve our clients in the best possible manner.

Once again it has been a busy year. The Board's Executive remained the same as last year with just a minor shuffle. Claudia Valle is now 1st Vice President, and Geoff Harvey is 2nd Vice President. Gary Gunning continued as Secretary-Treasurer.

At the provincial level, I am pleased to report that Judy Reid, NSS Board member and Chair of the NSS-NTEC Joint Board Alliance Committee, has continued to serve as Director-at-Large on the OASIS Board of Directors (Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs). This contribution by Judy serves our agency well, as we have a seat at the table where provincial issues are discussed and debated in the interest of the greater good for the sector and those we support.

As you know, in December Andrew Lewis's position as Chief Executive Officer was ratified unanimously by the Board. We are impressed with Andrew's dedication and quick transition to our top leadership position.

The Provincial Government has promised more money to our sector, which is very much welcomed. This money will go towards rectifying pay inequities in a sector that has been traditionally underpaid, and increasing service where possible. While we remain in an excellent financial position, there are still many services that need to be provided to families, and that will be our ongoing challenge.

We continue to create new opportunities for the people we support within the ever-changing landscape of our sector. The Developmental Services Transformation Initiative has presented both challenges and occasions for success at Niagara Support Services. Our team of dedicated management and frontline staff has managed to maintain the integrity of our existing programs with grace, while forging new ground as various government initiatives present themselves. This delicate balancing act is one of the driving forces behind the energy that is NSS! There is always something new and exciting on the horizon.

Our purchase of the Stamford Centre Volunteer Firemen's Association fire hall on Longhurst Avenue was completed in January, and a grand opening was held in June. The building has been renovated and is now a wonderful facility for some of our day programs. If you did not get a chance to see it at our opening, please feel free to visit. You will be impressed.

We are also celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the NSS and NTEC Alliance. Not all marriages do as well as ours. It has been a mutually beneficial, supportive union that both Boards are proud of, and plans are underway for even more NSS-NTEC joint projects.

In closing, I would like to commend our staff for again rising to any challenge with dedication and commitment. The strength of an organization is exhibited in its frontline workers, and ours are the best.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolynne Canham
President



Report from the Chief Executive Officer

As I sit to write my first Annual Report as Niagara Support Services' Chief Executive Officer, I am struck by the magnitude of the task. The basic premise is to present highlights of the year's activities so that members may gain a more complete understanding of the agency's progress and actions over the entire year.

Upon reflection, it would seem that the most significant successes, the most remarkable gains, and the most report-worthy actions are not those made at the agency level, but rather those made every day by the people we are here to serve. The agency's and sector's role becomes one of enabling achievement in others, and I would like to draw attention to some of the highlights that have helped to enable personal successes along the way.

April of 2006 saw the arrival of The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur as our new Minister of Community and Social Services, replacing Sandra Pupatello who moved on to become the Minister of Education. This appointment closely followed the Ministry's publication entitled, *Thriving Communities*, which outlined a new strategic direction in which the Ministry of Community and Social Services will be moving over the next number of years. We remain confident that as new directives are announced and new initiatives launched, Niagara Support Services will continue to maintain a foothold at the forefront of service delivery in our sector. We were privileged to welcome the new Minister to our administration site in November 2006, as she selected our agency to act as a backdrop for a Ministry funding announcement.

The year opened with the largest single one-year infusion of new resources in the sector, and closed with a rare multi-year commitment that would see the government committing to base increases over the next four consecutive years. The relevance of this statement is that it signals that our message has been getting through to those in lead roles within our Ministry, and is hopefully a harbinger of good things to come. It is only with a strong financial pledge from our primary funders that our agency can continue to grow responsibly and expand services to those in need.

Central to our Ministry's strategic vision and the future of our sector is the Developmental Services Transformation Initiative, which is based on six underlying principles: citizenship, fairness and equity, accessibility and portability, safety and security, accountability, and sustainability. As new initiatives have rolled out, the strategic alignment between the action and these principles is clear.

Inside our agency's walls it was a busy and exciting year as well, with all of our adult residential programs running at full capacity throughout the year. As our sector continues to maintain a waitlist for residential placements, Niagara Support Services continues to demonstrate its willingness and ability to seek out efficiencies within the system to expand service where possible.

Our children's residential programs have also continued to operate at or near capacity on all fronts. We run residential programs for children out of the Donald L. Reilly Centre on Sinnicks Avenue in Niagara Falls, as well as Canby Street Children's Residence in Port Robinson. After a few years of becoming established in the community, both of these programs have really hit their stride.

Our non-residential programs for children continue to include a very successful Preschool Services program, Children's Autism Program (CAP), and Family Support Services.

On the adult side of non-residential programs, we continue to offer a full complement of day programs, including our Community Employment Vocational Services (CEVS), and Community Skills programs.

All of these programs continue to thrive due to the exceptional and inspired group of individuals who comprise our employee team. Our team has expanded again over the past year, and at year-end totalled 155 – up by 14 from the previous year! These folks continue to breathe life into our many programs and services through their ceaseless efforts and commitment.

The most exciting acquisition for our agency occurred when we purchased the Stamford Centre Volunteer Firemen's Association building on Longhurst Avenue in Niagara Falls. This site had been home to our Community Skills day program for over ten years, primarily due to the benevolence of the Stamford Centre Volunteer Firemen's Association. When the opportunity to acquire and renovate the property arose, our Board was quick to support our request. With a facelift, much-needed air conditioning, and the entire building now at our disposal, plans can begin to consider expanding or enhancing program offerings.

This building also stands as a home base for our Intervenor and Interpreter Services program, which has expanded once again to serve one more individual who is deaf/blind. With the Ministry's continued emphasis on the Passport process for day program access, we are now in a better position than ever to nimbly adapt to requests for new service.

Another significant milestone was reached this year when the Alliance between Niagara Support Services and Niagara Training & Employment Agency (NTEC) reached its ten-year anniversary. Since 1997, these two agencies have worked tirelessly hand-in-hand to enhance services for people with disabilities. It is not the strength of each agency alone, but rather the strength found together through our Alliance that makes these agencies great. The vision of the Alliance reads:

“While respecting each agency's corporate identity, Niagara Support Services and Niagara Training & Employment Agency will work together towards the delivery of quality, cost effective supports, services and functions, with the overall goal of providing a broader spectrum of services for people with special needs in Niagara.”

It is clear that Niagara Support Services can look back on the first ten years of this partnership with pride, and look forward to many more years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Niagara Support Services, I would like to extend my personal thanks and appreciation for your support through this transitional period. Being charged with the great duty and honour of leading this agency has been a truly humbling experience, and I approach each day with a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for both the people we support, and our employees who support them.

I count each day that I remain linked to this agency as one of my greatest blessings. My association with such an inspiring and inspired group of people is a gift that I will forever treasure.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew Lewis
Chief Executive Officer

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee would like to report that the following board members of Niagara Support Services have one year left in their term of office, having been elected on September 26, 2006.

Beverley Allan Carolynne Canham Jane Gouck

The Nominating Committee would also like to offer a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09. The following people are qualified and have agreed to stand for a two-year term as a Director of Niagara Support Services.

Daniell F. Bartley
Maureen Connolly

Gary W. Gunning
Geoff Harvey

Elinor King
Judith K. Reid

Claudia Valle
Marion Woodcock

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Gouck,
Chair, Nominating Committee

Board Member Profiles

OFFICERS

Carolynne Canham

President



Carolynne has been a member of our Board of Directors since September 29, 1999, and has served as President since October 2005. She also serves on the Board of Trustees of Niagara Training & Employment Agency, the Board of Directors of Niagara Employment Agency, and is a member of the Joint Board Alliance Committee of NSS and NTEC. Carolynne has been married to her husband, Bob, for 42 years and is the proud grandmother of four wonderful grandchildren. She was a schoolteacher and principal during her 38 years in education, and in that time was very involved with programming for students with a developmental disability. Carolynne's experience in education makes her a valuable asset to Niagara Support Services.

Claudia Valle

1st Vice President



Claudia is a facilitator of leadership and teambuilding training programs, and has designed and delivered a variety of experiential learning programs for both adults and youth throughout Canada and the United States. Claudia currently works as the Director of The Frontier Group, a teambuilding company based here in Niagara. She is a concerned community partner, and has been involved in fundraising efforts on behalf of the YMCA and the Class A Henley Campaign that was instrumental in bringing the 1999 World Rowing Championships to St. Catharines. She is currently volunteering her time for Hospice Niagara on their fundraising committee, and was also a member of their capital campaign team that raised funds in support of the new Stabler Centre, a residential palliative care centre that opened in St. Catharines this summer.

OFFICERS

Geoff Harvey

2nd Vice President



Geoff joined our Board of Directors on April 22, 2003, and has served as 2nd Vice President since October 2006. He received his MSW at the University of Toronto in 1974, and is a counsellor with certificates in critical incident debriefing, addiction counselling, and EMDR therapy. Geoff is employed as a social worker/mental health worker with the Beamsville Family Health Team. His interest in the developmentally challenged was spurred by his previous work at the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre, and his family experience as a parent of a child diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome.

Gary W. Gunning

Secretary-Treasurer



Gary joined our Board of Directors on October 28, 1998, and has also been on the Boards of Niagara Training & Employment Agency (NTEC) and Niagara Employment Agency (Niagara Recycling) since April 28, 1993. He is currently Secretary and Finance Chair of NTEC and Niagara Employment Agency, and has been Secretary-Treasurer of Niagara Support Services since 2001. Gary is also a member of the Joint Board Alliance Committee of NSS and NTEC. As well, he is a charter life member, past secretary and past president of Stamford Kiwanis, and has been a member of the business community throughout his career. His experience varies from a large petroleum company to retail businesses. Currently, Gary is also President and Treasurer of the Friends of Lundy's Lane Battlefield.

Judith K. Reid

Past President



Judy joined our Board of Directors on June 16, 1999, and is our current past president. She has also been a member of the NTEC Board of Trustees and Board of Directors of Niagara Employment Agency since September 15, 1999, and has served as Chair of the NSS-NTEC Joint Board Alliance Committee since May 2001. Judy was re-elected to the Board of Directors of OASIS (Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs) in May 2007, and will continue to represent the two organizations, as well as the issues of Niagara while on this board. Presently residing in Fonthill, Ontario, Judy is a lifelong resident of the Niagara Peninsula. Judy retired in 1998 following a 30-year career as an educator with the District School Board of Niagara. She continues her interest in education working with the Business Education Council of Niagara as the Manager, Labour Force Development and Early Years Niagara. Judy's community participation also includes the position of past president of Adolescent's Family and Support Services of Niagara.

DIRECTORS

Beverley Allan



Beverley has been a member of our Board of Directors since June 23, 1986, serving as our President in 1989-92 and 2000-01. Bev was born in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and has recently moved back to Niagara Falls from Queenston. She is retired from a 40-year career as a schoolteacher. Beverley also has a son in our Supported Employment and Supported Living Programs. She is Past President of the Queenston Community Association, and has served on the Police Services Board as Vice-Chair. Her favourite pastime is reading a good book. Bev's history and experience are valuable assets to our board.

Daniell F. Bartley



Daniell received his Bachelor of Arts (Hons) at Brock University in 1998. He obtained his LLB at the University of Ottawa in 2001, and was called to the Ontario Bar in 2002. He articulated at a boutique labour law firm in Ottawa, and is now in-house-counsel for the City of Hamilton where he represents the municipality in various types of litigation with a specialty in trial work. Daniell has been greatly influenced by his mother who has worked with developmentally disabled adults for over 20 years. He has volunteered with Christian Horizons and the Special Olympics.

Maureen Connolly



Maureen joined our Board of Directors on September 15, 1999. She is a university professor with over 30 years in the field of physical education as a teacher, researcher, trainer, and disability advocate on campus for students and faculty. Her involvement in disability issues and programs in the Niagara Region is well-known. In 2002, Maureen was presented with the Brock Award for Distinguished Teaching, was awarded the 3M Teaching Fellowship Award in 2003, and in 2005, was awarded a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. Currently, Maureen has the role of Director of the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies and Director of the Institute for the Study of Exceptional Development (ISED) at Brock University. Maureen also serves on the Board of Trustees of Niagara Training & Employment Agency and the Board of Directors of Niagara Employment Agency.

DIRECTORS

Jane Gouck



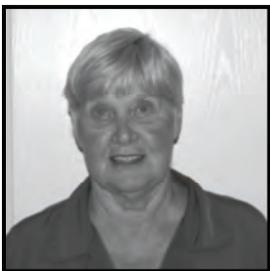
Jane joined our Board of Directors on September 30, 1996, and served as 2nd Vice President in 2003-04. She was employed as a resource teacher for our agency from 1978 to 1988. Jane is currently a Resource Consultant for Regional Niagara, a consultant for Quality Child Care Niagara, as well as a Roots of Empathy mentor for the Niagara Region. Jane is also a past board member of the Ontario Rhetts Syndrome Association and the YWCA. She is married with three children and enjoys running, and travelling throughout North America and Europe.

Elinor King



Elinor has been employed at Niagara Recycling since 1989 as controller and commercial sales coordinator. In 1993, she was involved with NTEC in the initiation of the Waste Management program. This joint program between NTEC and Niagara Recycling is a fully-integrated program that reaps rewards for all involved. Elinor has been a member of the Recycling Council of Ontario Awards Committee for ten years, and a member of the St. Catharines Chamber Governance Committee for the past five years. In the community, she has acted as treasurer for her family church, and past chair of her church's child care centre. Elinor and her husband, John, live in Ridgeway and have two adult children.

Marion Woodcock



Marion is a lifelong resident of the Niagara area, except for the past six years, which were spent in Calgary developing grandparenting skills. When her husband of 51 years was diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer, they decided to return home to be with extended family and friends. (Bruce passed away on July 19, 2007, and is greatly missed.) Marion served on the boards of NSS and NTEC for a number of years circa 1998, and worked closely with staff in support of these agencies. Marion has an extensive educational background, and is proud and supportive of the services offered by Niagara Support Services.

FISCAL YEAR IN REVIEW

(April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007)

Niagara Support Services gratefully acknowledges donations
from the following individuals and businesses

Mario & Elvira Aiello	Jan Ecker	Ellen B. McKay	Dr. Rosemonde Tannous
Angelo & Karen Albanese	Stuart Ellis	Mary Messina	Harold & Deborah Thomas
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Robert & Sheila Di Francesco	Heather Matson	Helen Tallman	
Bruce & Hilda Durno	Robert & Veronica Maxwell	Tallman Transport	

*We also acknowledge
the many gifts of time,
services, and products.
Your contributions are
sincerely appreciated.*

*We have done our best
to include all gifts
received during this time
period. We apologize
should any names be
omitted or misspelled.*

A number of these donations were in loving memory of

Charles "Bud" Campbell

Stanley Cooper

Jennie Cupolo

Gary Devoe

Boris Diomin

Michael Maci

Mary Mathieson

Robert "Bob" Szeles

Louis Walters

Ever to be Remembered

All donations are
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