Annual Report 2014

June 2014

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Independent-Living-Nova-Scotia @ILNS2014

ILNS supports consumers (people with disabilities): live their lives the way they want, stay in control of decisions that affect them, find the services and contacts they need, get information that is useful and clear, break through barriers that are in the way and develop their skills.

ILNS Board Members 2013/2014

Brian Hennen 2006- 2014	Robert Ganong 2011-
Steve Estey 2007-	Louise Gillis 2011-
Murray Vandewater 2007	Patricia Gates 2011-
Jimmy Arnott 2008- 2014	Jeremy MacDonald 2011
Sarah Dube 2009-	Lois Miller 2012-

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independent living NOVA SCOTIA

ILNS Staff 2013-2014

Sherry Costa, Executive Director, 2011-

Randy Reede, Admin/Outreach Coordinator, 2012-

Roswell James, part-time Bookkeeper, 2011-

Jennifer MacNeil, ACEE Program Manager, 2013

Marian Bulley, Career Facilitator, 2011-

Gordie Publicover, ACEE Job Developer, 2011-

Lindsay MacDonald, assigned to ACEE by Halifax regional School Board, 2005-

Lori Edgar, assigned to ACEE by Affirmative Ventures, 2005-

Marianne Colbourne, Out & About Coordinator, 2013-

New Faces at ILNS

Jenn MacNeil, ACEE program manager recently joined the ILNS staff in March. Jenn holds a Bachelor of Arts with an Honors in Psychology from St. Mary's university, and a Bachelor of Social Work from Dalhousie University. Before joining ILNS Jenn worked as a case manager for teamwork cooperative an organization that assists persons with disabilities in finding employment. She has also held positions with Service Canada and other career resource centers. Jenn has had a great deal of involvement in the disability community including sitting on the board of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, starting the first youth chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind, and holding the positions of president and vice president with Blind Sports Nova Scotia. She has also advocated for issues of people with disabilities, particularly in the field of blindness. As a person with a disability, Jenn is well aware of the struggles that persons with disabilities face, and believes strongly in the ILNS philosophy as this is how she has always lived her life. Her goal is to continue to share this philosophy with others, and to continue increasing accessibility and a barrier free world for persons with disabilities.

Victoria Cicchino has joined the ILNS team as the **Festival Coordinator** for the 2014 Art of Disability Festival. Victoria holds a Bachelors of Arts with a Major in Women Studies from Mount Saint Vincent University, and is a currently finishing her Social Work degree at Dalhousie University. "*It is clear that society has seen fit to mold the idea of Resilience into one that would suggest that all individuals are accountable for their own strengths and weaknesses. This is a concept that I look to challenge. Relevant social determinants of health, which can include, but are not limited to, ability, gender, race, socio-economic status, or geographic location are responsible for a range of opportunities, or lack thereof. These are factors that society commonly and comfortably ignore, and allow us to take on a passive, or even submissive role in accountability for another individual's health and wellbeing. For this reason, I have sought out a profession that draws from the strength of a community, empowers those who are marginalized outside the 'traditional' sectors of productivity or value, and has adopted a responsibility for all individuals*".

2013 Christmas Gala

2013 Dance-A-Thon

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Sherry Costa

MORE THAN TWO DECADES OF SERVICE

As I sit drafting what will be the last Executive Director Report from the existing Bloomfield Centre, I can't help but think of the organizational history created within these walls. From the Metro Resource Centre for Independent Living's humble beginnings to our current 2014 Annual General Meeting, Independent Living Nova Scotia has become an integral part of Nova Scotia's disability landscape.

Above all else, I acknowledge the contributions of our staff, board members and other volunteers who give so much of themselves in service to our consumers. All made, and continue to make, significant contributions to ensure ILNS continues to navigate the waters. I thank each and every one of you for supporting this organization to remain responsive to the needs in an ever-changing economic environment with heightened demands and increased outcomes and accountabilities.

Through all the change, our commitment to our consumers remains strong as we seek new ways to respond to needs and manage information while delivering programs and services. We continue to move our information management to a digital platform. Over the past year a number of new databases were created. Among these is a database developed in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education, Disability Services, to manage and administer the student self-managers program more efficiently and effectively. This restructuring in data management will more optimally support ILNS while helping to build capacity.

Our integrated social media platform with a new accessible website, FaceBook page and Twitter account is proving to be a real asset in connecting consumers with information, referrals or networking as well as peer support. It has also expanded ILNS reach with inquiries and connections not only form around the province but also the country, effectively raising awareness of our organization; who we are and what we do.

Our Independent Living Skills programs, Self-managed Attendant Services and Access to Community, Education & Employment (ACEE, pronounce "ace") continue to grow and evolve. Since its inception, more than 200 youth with disabilities will have graduated from the ACEE program as of June 2014. But this is not without its challenges as we see increasing numbers of consumers with higher, more complex needs with few programs available to fit their news. It is ILNS' plan to address this issue.

All of what we accomplished this past year has been done while adjusting to the most extreme funding cuts the disability community has seen in the sector in decades. We've weathered past storms through a combination of determination, resiliency and creativity and we will weather this storm as well. Our knowledge

of the non-profit sector has led to some creative thinking that has, in turn, led to new partnerships, opportunities for collaboration and shared services.

It is my privilege to represent Independent Living Nova Scotia. As the impacts of new partnerships and collaborations are realized over the months and years ahead, ILNS' ability to respond to the community will be enhanced exponentially, resulting in continuous improvements in service for our consumers.

Independent Living
Vie autonome
Canada
Voir au-delà du handicap
Promoting a new perspective on disability

IL Canada Year End analysis is now complete and we thought we would share some interesting facts about the impact we are making in our communities with all the IL Centres stats combined, in the last 6 months...

And we did all that… with 191 staff and some great volunteers.

- There were 68,777 newsletters circulated.
- There were 2,402,154 website hits.
- There are 14,674 volunteers helping out.
- There were 258 new skills building workshops held.
- There were 573 new peer groups supported.
- There are 2,839 community partnerships and stakeholders
- There were 496 organizations contributing in kind contributions.
- There were 409 letters of intent or proposals submitted.
- There were 786 disability awareness training opportunities.
- There were 9,529 media articles/tv/radio spots made.
- There were 60,676 inquiries.

Things are happening across the country and we wanted to share some ventures that have been taking place at other IL Centres. If you see the potential of delivering this kind of service at your Centre, please connect with each other…share ideas… share support.

Parry Sound, RISE ILC

In an effort to reduce Core operational costs (rent, telephone, internet), RISE relocated, saving a whopping $15,000 in annual overhead costs. This move also enabled RISE to join forces with key community service providers to enhance capacity for outreach and support to people with disabilities across Parry Sound and Muskoka.

Thunder Bay, ILRC

"At the time we wrote our midyear report, I was actively seeking a potential revenue stream from subletting space at the Centre." "...our insurer would cover NAMED entities to sublet, however, those entities would need to provide proof of supplying their own liability insurance." "…the model I had intended to use had the potential of generating $580/month against our $2840/month of operating expenses (lease and utilities approx.) That is just a little more than 20% of our facilities operating (costs)…"

North Saskatchewan ILRC

With the delivery of their successful Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (funded by Western Economic Development and Core) the Centre capitalized on that program and was able to offer available office space to local entrepreneurs and small business owners who worked from home, but needed occasional access to a professional office when meeting with certain clients or for special occasions. Membership fees for this 'flexible' private work space vary from daily to monthly rates, and include access to the Board Room.

TRANSITIONAL TASK GROUP (TTG)

We are pleased to advise that the TTG has completed a Transitional Action Plan, which will set the direction of IL Canada over the next 18 to 24 months. The plan was submitted to the IL Canada Board of Directors and it has been accepted.

A huge thank you to Tom Pugliese, Brenda Elliot, Jim Arnott, Rob DiMeglio, Darrell Smith, Roger Albert, Katie Paialunga and Brian Tardiff (who facilitated the process) who gave their time and energy in the development of this plan. Your contributions and positive feedback was greatly appreciated and we couldn't have done it without your support.

ILNS Co- Chairs Report, June 2014

As the co-chairs of the ILNSA board we report on the 2013-2014 year's activities in meeting the challenges and responding to the opportunities presented to us. We begin with a reminder of the ILNSA mission statement.

We support persons with disabilities to make informed choices about how they want to live their lives. We provide this support by offering programs and services that promote independent living.

Independent living is about having choices, making decisions, taking risks, making mistakes, and taking responsibility for your decisions. Independent living means having control over your life.

At the board's November 9, 2013 retreat, ably facilitated by Margaret Fraser, we considered five priorities: communication and public relations; funding; programming; partnerships and space.

1. Communication and Public Relations

We are working towards wider provincial recognition and outreach. Website development, media contacts, regional partnerships and fund development are part of this.

2. Funding

Federal financial cutbacks, resulting this year (2014) in the discontinuance of fund distribution to regional ILs have forced Independent Living Canada and each of its 27 affiliates, to review their administrative partnerships. Presently a discussion is under way with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities at the national level to consider collaborative strategies. Steve Estey, Lois Miller and Jim Arnott are active participants in these discussions and would welcome your comments.

Treasurer Murray Vandewater's report reflects these financial challenges and points to the need for augmenting fund development activities and finding financial efficiencies.

3. Programming

Our " Student Self managers" program and the original core of Self Mangers continue to be administered by ILNS. The ACEE (Access to Community Education and Employment) program has completed another successful year graduating 18 participants this year. The ACEE Advisory Committee continues to review the program with pending recommendations from both the ACEE team and an external consultant.

ACEE and ILNS said farewell and thank you to David Wareing as the ACCE Program Manager (we will do this formally at our Annual General Meeting). David has been with ACEE since its inception and has served us well, including acting as a successful and respected ambassador for us with the community. We welcome, Jennifer MacNeil as the new ACEE program manager.

The popular social programs such as the Christmas Gala, the Dance-a-thon, and the summer Art Festival were once more enjoyed by ILNS members. The 'Out and About' program has continued. Sherry Costa recently announced the appointment of Victoria Cicchino as this year's Summer Festival Coordinator.

4. Partnerships

At the provincial level, we have begun exploratory discussions with other disability-involved "not for profit" organizations looking for opportunities to share services and office space. Most recently we've agreed to meet with Nova Scotia League of Equal Opportunities (NSLEO) to explore potential joint efficiencies and common activities. Twenty-five organizations serving persons with disabilities have participated in a "Shared Services Dialogue" exploring collaborations in space use, service deployment and administrative practices. ILNS has established over 60 partner groups and presently serves 280 individual members.

5. Space

As Bloomfield shuts down for major rebuilding by its government owners, our executive director, Sherry Costa, has been assiduously considering possible future sites for ILNS offices and for the ACEE program. At this time the sites are Bayers Road for ILNS offices and APSEA for ACEE.

Political Involvement

ILNS board, our executive director and general members have demonstrated active interest in political awareness of the needs of persons with disability. We took part actively in two major pre- provincial election discussions and were very proud when one of our current board members, Steve Estey, made an exceptional showing in Dartmouth North as the NDP candidate. Though unsuccessful, he established himself as a political force and he has been able to sustain the recognition of the new Minister of Community Services as an expert on the Rights of Person with Disabilities. Steve recently played a major role in an all day event promoting greater participation of persons with disabilities in political leadership. A former board chair and self manager, Kevin Murphy, was the successful Liberal candidate in Porter Lake, and was elected Speaker in the new government. Just over a year ago, Mike Savage, displayed the blue book of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, on his campaign trail. Mayor Savage recently introduced his lead person on Inclusion and Accessibility, Steve Craig, at the PAANS flag raising ceremony for Access Awareness Week. As the chair of the Partnership for Access Awareness Nova Scotia (PAANS), our executive director, Sherry Costa, played a leading role in the activities of Access Awareness week including chairing the flag raising ceremony and the Proclamation ceremony in the Red Room of the Legislature. This year's theme was "Community Matters".

The board welcomes Sheldon Higdon as its newest member. Sheldon has a background in Pharmacy and has served on the boards of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and the Bocci advisory board.

Your board continues to work on our members' behalf. We need your comments and your ideas. Let us know what we're doing right and what we need to do differently. Talk to your own political leaders; your municipal counselors, your MLA's and your MP's. Keep them aware of the issues troubling you most and let us know when you've had a useful discussion with them.

Thank you for the privilege of being a member of your board.

Jimmy Arnott and Brian Hennen

Co-chairs

Board of Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JUNE 12TH, 2013

Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

5:00 p.m. Welcome:

Sherry Costa (Executive Director) welcomed everyone and introduced Randy Reede (Information & Outreach Coordinator) as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

Randy introduced the guest speaker- Mayor Mike Savage.

Summary of Mayor Savages' remarks:

Mayor Savage reflected on his time as MP for Dartmouth and his involvement as Liberal critic for people with disabilities. He spoke to the need to remove systemic barriers and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

He spoke of the importance of the work done by our Board member Steve Estey, the importance of how Canada is seen in the world and the importance of how we see our governments at work.

Mayor Savage pondered on how we can honour the UN Convention, and spoke of the change in thinking from charity to justice to a sense of investment in people with disabilities, across that broad spectrum.

Currently in his role as HRM Mayor, he is keen to move the work of the accessibility advisory committee forward, which includes councillors Watts and Craig. On June 11th, HRM Council passed a motion re: sidewalk encroachment(s), which is a huge issue for accessibility in Halifax in particular.

The biggest impediment to change is jurisdiction. Each level of government leaves it to the other. There is a clear need to work together to address issues, as all the issues are our joint responsibilities.

The UN Convention is about right of citizenship and we should be able to offer accessible services at all levels.

Mayor Savage also noted that it is important for community leaders to make positive change – many agencies can come together to make a difference in the lives of all people to achieve our potential.

The Mayor spoke about making HRM the most liveable community in the country, and encouraged all of us to consider taking lead roles in making that happen.

Murray thanked the Mayor for his comments, and noted that his words are true to what the Mayor hopes to achieve.

Q&A:

John V: Housing in metro is an issue for the disabled and the aging, e.g. ramps that still lead to steps etc. How do we get developers to change styles and what can HRM do?

Mayor: HRM is looking at mixed housing (families, single persons, accessible etc.) and transit friendly. HRM has started talking to experts in the field to help develop these new styles.

Steve: hard for people to participate in activities at City Hall – is there a fund to provide assistive devices or other improvements including interpreters, wheelchair access and so on? Lois pointed out there is no fund in her experience.

Mayor – will follow up on that thought – invited everyone to become part of various committees of HRM so that education about needs as well as input on different aspects of work can include benefits to and concerns of the disabled community.

John: Garbage pick up in some areas is very early in the morning- how do I know when this will take place?

Mayor/ Josh: There is an "app" being developed that tells you what time and what day the pick up will be on your street.

Pat: when will the audible installation on buses begin?

Mayor/Josh: The first item of business on the buses is the GPS system and the second is the automated programs, so the answer is "very soon".

Dan: HRM has come a long way in the past 30 years, but the biggest issue for people with disabilities is the cost of rent. If we are marginalised we cannot participate in public life. Need to have more input form us on rent and other issues.

Mayor: again it goes back to three levels of government need to make the changes together. HRM is more open – does not always meet behind closed doors, and is more open to discussion.

Gillian: concerned that young adults complete high school, are integrated socially, but may not be included socially once they graduate.

Mayor: understand the huge gap for some who may have nothing to go to after school and that there is high demand for opportunities, but these are limited. As a community we should be looking t ways of hiring more young people with disabilities, and he looks forward to working with ILNS and other agencies to move forward on all of the issues raised.

Randy thanked the Mayor for attending and giving us his time and thoughts.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING- JUNE 12TH, 2013

Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

6:00 p.m. Business Meeting

Murray Vandewater (chair for the meeting) called the meeting to order.

Regrets: Brian Hennen, Jimmy Arnott,

Murray asked the Board members present to introduce themselves: Pat Gates, Robert Ganong, Jeremy MacDonald, Steve Estey, Lois Miller, Sarah Dube, Louise Gillis (via computer) Sherry Costa (Executive director – staff), Margaret Fraser (minute-taker to the Board)

Approval of agenda – moved by Sarah Dube **CARRIED**

Minutes of 2012 AGM – as printed in annual report – acceptance moved by Robert Ganong seconded by Jeremy MacDonald **CARRIED**

Auditor's report – Murray (as treasurer) presented the report as circulated.

Notes: the auditor has noted that we present good management of funds. We have added $30,000 to our "wind up "fund, if that should ever happen. This would pay for final wages and other bills should the organization need to close. Murray assured the meeting that this is not likely to happen in the foreseeable future.

The deficit of %957 is due to a reduction in receipts from the National Office.

There is a reference to accounting standards from the auditor's report, which puts us in good standing.

Murray asked for questions. There being none, he asked for a motion to receive the DRAFT audited financial statements (which will only be DRAFT until they are accepted by the members). So moved: Dan McLellan.

Seconded by David Wareing- **CARRIED**

Motion to approve Mitchell L. Miller as auditor for the 2013-2014 fiscal year: question of clarification- Mitchell has been auditor for four years.

So moved: Dan McLellan, seconded by Pat Gates **CARRIED**

Presentation of reports as printed in annual report:

Murray noted that all reports will be spoken to, and then a motion to accept as the final report will be put forward.

As neither of the co-chairs were able to attend this evening, and as there were no questions on their report, Sherry was invited to speak to her Executive Director's report:

A special note that the ACEE program has an interim home at APSEA for the next year until other accommodation is found. Sherry also noted that ILNS has its first patron – the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Murray added that this is quite an honour and achievement.

Jeremy offered the nomination committee report: he added that Steve Estey has confirmed his continuance on the board.

Jeremy moved, Lois seconded acceptance of his report **CARRIED**

Lois added that some other members have since come forward to offer to sit on the board on an interim basis.

Marianne spoke to her Out and About report and invited everyone to come along!

David spoke to the ACEE report. He has received mixed reaction to the move, some looking forward to going to the new location and some disappointed about not attending in a college atmosphere.

Randy spoke to his Information and Referrals report: anyone with any questions on a service or general information should contact him. There is an increase in calls about housing and equipment.

Murray noted a special thank you to Randy for his participation in the 5km Bluenose Marathon, and congratulations for not only reducing his time, but raising $2,500 for ILNS – well done Randy!

Sherry spoke to the Self-Management program, with some questions to the funder about current rates paid to participants.

Murray spoke to Jimmy's IL Canada report: there is some concern about future programs and challenges due to changes at National. The Board will keep members informed.

Sherry spoke to the fund-development report – many thanks to those who continue to support ILNS, and she noted that there are some names not mentioned in the report. Everyone's support is extremely important and very much appreciated.

Murray asked for a motion to accept the Annual Report as presented:

So moved: Dan McLellan, seconded Gillian Grant **CARRIED**

Other business and announcements

Lois Miller announced that ILNS Board member Sarah Dube will receive a Lifestyle Award from the NS League for Equal Opportunities for "Best in full participation in Community". Congratulations, Sarah!

There being no other business, adjournment was moved by Gillian at 6:20pm.

Town Hall Discussion – Life Skills Programs beyond High School

An explanation of the system Steve has been using was offered. By speaking into the mikes, and through specialized technology, "someone" is typing every word so that it is then relayed onto Steve's lap top so that he can read the proceedings. This system is called **Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)**

Sherry introduced the discussion paper from March 12th 2013, and quoted several points from it. The focus is Life Skills (or lack of programs) beyond High School. This has been an issue for some time, and at this meeting concerns were raised again.

What can ILNS do to address some of these issues?

Additional information: Dorothy indicated that Acadia has a program, which is on their website. This is an integrated program, but does not give certification or degrees. David added that ACEE has a client in that program. Some discussion on the importance of experiencing university life as part of personal growth.

Discussion on the importance of employers knowing that young people with disabilities can do a variety of jobs as an "assistant" – example of an employer taking out a piece of the job description from a position to offer it to a young person with disabilities – this proved very successful for all!

Can entrepreneurs be mentors to young people in a job that the young person is passionate about and that is really important to them?

Are we educating employers about being more receptive? Yes, the ACEE program does that and with the "ability starts here" program we are working with the province on a disability strategy – we are on the "disability table working group".

There is a new agency (will be a for-profit) based at Teamworks that is connecting employers with potential employees – we can make some connections there for ILSN clients.

ACEE also recruits employers and educates them one-on-one – talks about what the employee can do. Mentoring needs to be increased – a volunteer program in the Valley has developed a support group.

Inclusion in the school system will eventually lead to more social and employment opportunities for young adults. They will be valued in the broader society.

There could be more grants for employers.

Dorothy attended a symposium on disability and employment – suggests we bring in David Fisher (speaker).

Need to develop a culture of understanding.

ILNS needs to have a level of conversation on this.

Does this conversation give ILNS the go-ahead to work on some of these key points? Yes!

We need speakers to inspire us.

Sherry thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and invited us to enjoy dessert. Meeting adjourned at 7.45p.m.

This Past Year at ACEE

ACEE 2013-2014 was a great year. We had 37 individuals apply, and accepted 26. 4 were placed on the waitlist, and 7 were rejected. Out of the 26 participants who attended, we had 10 individuals exit for a number of reasons during the year. For those who stayed in the program, there were many opportunities provided. This report will outline some of those opportunities.

ACEE participants had the pleasure of being visited by several different presenters throughout the year. They were able to complete their first aid through St. John's ambulance, had presentations on occupational health and safety, WHMIS, and completed their passport to safety. The Mayor also came and provided the class with tickets to a Halifax Moose heads game, which everyone enjoyed. Robert Chisolm, MP for Dartmouth and area, also visited the class and gave a presentation. Other presenters included Job Junction, Ceed, Youth Art Connection, Keshin Goodman Library, PAANS, and many more. Workshops provided to ACEE students included, interview skills, cyber bullying, Diversity and Disclosure, as well as financial literacy. Participants were also provided an opportunity to participate in the PAANS Access Awareness poster contest. One of our participants was the contest winner. A pizza party was provided to the participants for their excellent work in the poster contest. Special thank you to PAANS for providing both the opportunity for the students to participate, as well as the pizza party.

Participants also attended several outings during the year. Some of these included the Canada Games Centre, a Visit to CEED, cooking at Atlantic Super Store, Nutrition training at Sobeys, Keshin Goodman Library, Job Junction, and Service Canada.

ACEE Work Placements and Job Development

During the other two days of ACEE, participants attended their work placements, which are run by our partner affirmative ventures. This partner has the ability to train, measure and assess the participants to develop work readiness. Participants worked at either a Pet store, Pet Stuff on the go, or Common Values, a store that is run in Halifax. Participants worked two shifts per week. Several of our students, through working with Affirmative Ventures, were deemed work ready, and would go on to work with our job developer, who is diligently helping them in their search for employment. He has attended job-shadowing opportunities with some of our participants, and has also been attending job interviews with others. He also provides 1-1 interview training to the participants to help them prepare. He visits employers in the community to encourage them to hire our students, and helps to establish connections for the participants.

For the first time at ACEE, we have an ACEE Ambassador. This individual attends different events in the community, and is a participant who represents ACEE in the community. The individual was nominated, and all participants were able to vote for the winner. Our first ACEE ambassador that was chosen was Brandon Smith. Brandon has shown strong leadership during the ACEE program. He has volunteered his time and energy to help with different ACEE activities, has participated in the tools for Life conference, was the PAANS Poster Contest Winner, and also volunteered to assist ILNS staff. Brandon is a true example of what we hope all of our ACEE participants can achieve. Brandon is planning on attending the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education full time in the fall of 2014. We would like to thank Brandon for being the ACEE ambassador of the class for 2014, and wish him good luck in his future endeavors.

"ACEE was a door that opened me up to my future."

-Brandon Smith

Education and Career Resource Facilitator

Several of the participants have expressed an interest in going on to further education. We have several students interested in attending the Nova Scotia Community College, as well as the Nova Scotia College of early Childhood Education. We also have one individual who is interested in attending Eastern Esthetics, which is a Nail Technology school. We have some individuals who are also planning to attend other community programs such as learning kitchens, options program, Reachability, and others. Our Career Resource Facilitator has been working with these individuals on the application process, as well as attending test drives with the students throughout the year.

As mentioned above, several of our participants have attended different test drives within the community. Some of these include Learning Kitchen, Academy of Cosmetology, Eastern Esthetics, Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education, NSCC Heavy Equipment Mechanic, Carpenter's Millwright Trades College, and NSCC Culinary Arts Program, just to name a few. We also had three students attend a digital Boot camp through the Nova Scotia Centre of Art and Technology.

ACEE also held Test Drives for the high schools in HRM to allow potential participants an opportunity to come to the program and see what it was like. There were 6 Test Drives, with a total of 52 students from 14 high schools involved. We hope to continue to increase the number of test drives in the 2014-2015 year.

Volunteering

We have had several participants engage in volunteer placements in their community throughout the duration of ACEE. Some of the places that individuals have volunteered include HRM Recreation programs, YMCA of Greater Halifax, Compatible Computers, Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank, and APSEA Cafeteria. Several of these will continue after participants have left the program. Participants have also assisted through volunteering at ILNS including assisting with the ILNS move and assisting to complete a mail-out for the Christmas Gala.

ACEE Program Updates

ACEE moved to a new location for the 2013-2014 year, as the Nova Scotia Community College was no longer able to accommodate the program. ACEE was moved to the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) Centre on South Street. Special thank you goes out to APSEA for providing ACEE this space. ACEE will also be held out of the APSEA Centre next year while we look for a more permanent location.

Another large change that occurred for ACEE was the change of Program Managers. David Wareing, previous Program Manager, left the program in December of 2013. Job developer Gordie Publicover was acting Program Manager until the new Manager Jenn MacNeil was hired in March of 2014. We would like to say a special thank you to David for his time with the program, and wish him luck in his new endeavor.

As ACEE is going into its 10th year, the program is being reviewed. All programs need to be evaluated and improved upon to keep up with the demand, and to ensure that the program is doing what it is set out to do. The Program Manager, the Executive Director, Advisory Committees and ACEE team are working together to evaluate where ACEE is currently, and to consider what changes would need to be made to continue to improve the program.

2014-2015 Intake

During the months of April and May, the ACEE team began the intake process for the following year. This year we had 32 individuals apply to the program, 26 were accepted, 1 declined, and 2 were on the waitlist. Three individuals were not accepted in to the program, and one individual is on our waitlist. Although we will miss the current group we have this year, we look forward to the next year of ACEE, and are excited to see another group of individuals come through our doors.

Jennifer MacNeil, Program Manager

ACEE Literacy & Numeracy Report

As always, it is with mixed emotions that I reflect on the past year at ACEE as the program winds down for another year. On one hand, I am thrilled to see our participants successfully complete the program and continue to move forward with their transition into the community. This could mean obtaining paid employment, continuing to pursue their educational goals, or volunteering where their passion comes to life and they are able to shine. On the other hand, I will dearly miss working with the participants with whom I have gotten to know so well and shared in their joys (as well as their bumps) along the way.

This was an exciting year for the ACEE program as we relocated to APSEA. The participants responded positively and adjusted quickly to our new location, and they fully embraced all that the program had to offer. We covered many interesting topics in the Literacy and Numeracy workshops and the participants demonstrated enthusiasm and a love for learning the whole year through. Some of the literacy topics that we explored included practical applications for finding information, practice with the bus system, job search skills, industry trends, filling out letters and forms, resumes and cover letters, interview skills, and consumer choice. Some of the numeracy topics included budgeting, calculating wages, money math, and banking. We also covered other interesting topics such as voting, occupational health and safety, emergency preparedness, and first aid training.

Some of our memorable field trips included a tour of Pier 21, a Mooseheads game, cooking at the Superstore, a day of fun at the Canada Games Centre, a tour of a local career centre, and a day exploring the wonderful things that a library has to offer. We also had many guest speakers visit with the ACEE program including Mayor Savage, Hope for Wildlife, CEED, and Youth Art Connection. All of these outings and presentations helped empower the participants in navigating services throughout HRM, networking with others, and learning about organizations that may be of interest in their community.

In addition to the enhancement and development of literacy and numeracy skills, I have also witnessed a tremendous amount of growth in their self-advocacy, independence skills, supportive risk taking, and confidence. I have also seen friendships evolve and grow that I am sure will last a lifetime. As with every year, watching the participants become self empowered and flourish throughout the year is best part of my job. It is both an honor and privilege to work with such optimistic and energetic youth and to be a part of this exciting time in their lives. I would like to thank each and every one of the participants for their dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm throughout the year. I wish them all of the best in their future endeavors, and I hope that all of their dreams come true.

Lindsey MacDonald – ACEE Literacy and Numeracy Teacher

ACEE Employment Training Component

Every fall the staff and employees of Affirmative Ventures look forward to meeting the new group of participants who are beginning their journey towards employment.

Petstuff on the Go and Common Values are the two social enterprise businesses that provide the employment training component of ACEE. These businesses create opportunities for participants who have an interest and desire to join the workforce.

ACEE participants will gain essential, transferable, work place skills through on the job training with job coach support. Employees will begin their training with short shifts to determine where they are and what needs to be done to move forward towards the goal of being "job ready." A variety of tasks will be undertaken over the course of training and will include merchandising, inventory, cash training, packaging, clerical and whole host of other jobs ensuring employees are busy and constantly building their skill set! Employees have the opportunity to build a range of employment skills, develop positive work habits and learn appropriate job behaviors in order to successfully secure and maintain employment.

During work place training, employees are also involved in weekly meetings, which discuss a variety of topics relating to work place issues from "how to accept and learn from feedback," to "is your attitude showing' "shining in the eyes of the customer " ,"putting your best foot forward" and demonstrating enthusiasm on the job". After these meetings as part of our participation in the heart and stroke 10,000 steps program we venture out on a brisk walk.

An initial 12 week work place assessment is provided that identifies the employee's areas of strength and areas that will need to develop over the coming weeks. This process then continues for the duration of the ACEE program with the end goal of being "job ready" as the main focus. For employees keen to learn and develop the options and experiences are wide and varied and guaranteed to provide a strong foundation with which to make future decisions.

Affirmative Ventures believes, "Helping People Work Makes a Difference"

Information & Referrals

We continue to receive inquiries for variety of disability issues including transportation, accessibility, housing etc. One example was an individual that was concerned that they were getting evicted from their apartment. Because of their cognitive disabilities they found it difficult to navigate through the system relating to the Tenancy Board. ILNS gave supports through information and proper contacts to the individual. We also received inquiries from 211 (government agency for inquiries on government program and services). Information from other organizations, business and government that we receive is forwarded through our network. We received an email from a Social Worker at the IWK thanking ILNS for sending out such information. "I just wanted to thank you for all of your postings. They are helping me keep families posted about what is happening in the community as it relates to people with disabilities".

Randy Reede- Information /Outreach Coordinator

Community Participation

Employability Table

Over the past four years it has been my privilege to work with the Nova Scotia Persons with Disabilities Employability Table which was established by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education to make recommendations on strategies to increase the number of persons with disabilities successfully entering and remaining in the Nova Scotia workforce. The *Blueprint for Action Report* is the culmination of the work completed by table members and will be presented to the Ministers Panel on Education in the fall. With all the work that has gone into these recommendations, table members opted to continue to meet to ensure these achievements are realized.

Shared Services

Independent Living Nova Scotia partnered with the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities (NSLEO) and the Disabled Persons Commission (DPC) to bring disability organizations that were impacted with funding cuts together for a facilitated dialogue on how do we prosper and grow to be sustainable in an ever-changing economic environment. Twenty- five organizations met at the Harbourview Holiday Inn in Dartmouth to discuss the possibility of working toward a culture of collaboration, partnerships, and shared services. During the discussion, participants identified ownership, finding common ground, approach with funders and service delivery as key areas for potential change in how organizations currently work. Two follow up meetings with seven organizations were led by Common Good Solutions at ILNS' office to discuss models of shared space in greater depth.

ILNS Executive Director,

Sherry Costa

This year I have been active in two other organizations whose work touches on that of Independent Living Nova Scotia; namely, Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities (NS LEO) and the Nova Scotia Services for Persons with Disabilities Transformation Advisory Committee ("Transformation Committee"). I'll touch on both groups briefly.

NS LEO

The mission of NS LEO is to address issues that affect people with disabilities in Nova Scotia. One way NS LEO fulfills this mission is by making annual presentations to the three caucuses of provincial MLAs. NS LEO is the Nova Scotia member of the national disability organization, Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD). Recently, as secretary of the NS LEO board of directors, I had the privilege to attend the CCD annual general meeting in Winnipeg. At that meeting, we had a presentation by the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, and we also reviewed--critically--Canada's first report on how our nation and each province/territory are meeting the goals of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Also during the CCD meeting, I gained information about discussions between CCD and our own national organization, Independent Living Canada. Both national organizations are struggling under the recent federal funding cuts, and are engaging in national talks on options for moving forward, separately or in a new relationship. The discussions are being funded by the federal government. The facilitators of the talks have identified several options--at this stage for discussion purposes only:

- Maintain the status quo, with each organization keeping its own identity, but perhaps with more collaboration between member groups locally and provincially.
- Merge, with CCD coming under the IL Canada umbrella, or vice versa

- Amalgamate: the two national organizations coming together to form one new consumer-based and cross-disability national organization. CCD would bring to the new organization its focus on public policy, and IL Canada its service provision.

We'll hear more about these talks over the next few months.

Transformation Committee

It's been my privilege to serve on the Transformation Committee, a joint community-government committee which, during the course of the past year or so, has developed a Roadmap for transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities program ("The Roadmap"). The previous NDP government had endorsed the Roadmap and I am delighted that the Liberal government has also accepted the Roadmap. The key goals of the transformation process are these:

1. Greater self-direction, choice and control by people with disabilities and their families
2. Modernized delivery system for supports and services to advance social and economic inclusion
3. Increased capacity and involvement of generic community systems in enabling inclusion

As Nova Scotia increases capacity for supports and services in the community, the Roadmap will lead us toward community-based living for persons with disabilities and reduced reliance on large facility-based living.

Wendy Lill, former Member of Parliament for Dartmouth and also former board member of Independent Living NS, co-chairs the Transformation Committee. The committee met recently with the Department of Community Services to develop a firm action plan with measurable outcomes and timelines.

ILNS Board Member,

Lois Miller

Access Awareness Week 2014 was, yet again, a great success!

PAANS poster challenge- theme: **Community Matters**

Scholarship Luncheon Speaker- Noah MacNeil

Sherry Costa, Mayor Mike Savage, Councilor Steve Craig & Jennifer MacNeil raising the flag

Speaker of the House, Kevin Murphy; Minister of Community Services, Joanne Bernard; Andre McConnell & Wanda Hebb

Out & About Report

Out & About is an open social group from persons with disabilities. During the 2014 year we had a ton of fun visiting the Public Gardens, the Discovery Centre, bowling, crafting and even had a dance party. This group is designed to build relationships within the community and celebrate our uniqueness. As a member of Independent Living this group is free (occasional nominal fee for certain outings) and welcomes any person with a disability. Out & About has finished for the summer but will begin again in September. Please come out and enjoy a fun Friday afternoon with old and new friends.

Marianne Colbourne- Out & About Coordinator

Out and About Gang

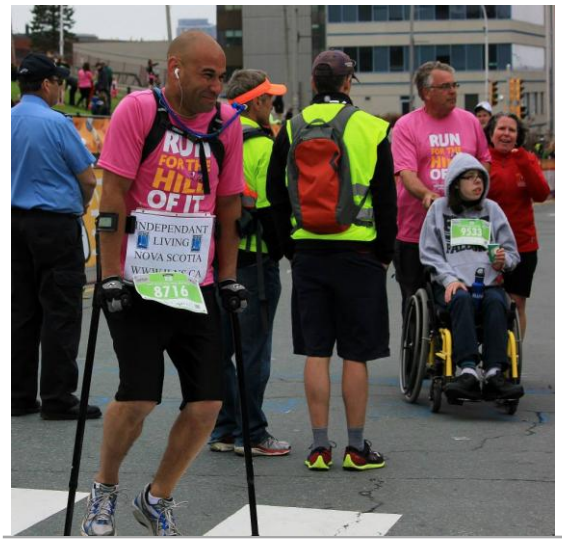
Independent Living at the Bluenose Marathon

The Bluenose Marathon was held this year on May 17&18. Although I did not directly participant in this year's Bluenose I was in charge of organizing and supervising the ILNS team for the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. ILNS team members are; Mark Kenny who completed the 5 km, Tim J Martin who completed the 10 km on crutches and Mark Nelson who completed the half marathon. ILNS would like to thank them for their support and fundraising efforts. Our fundraising goal this year was set at $3500. Because it was our first year being part of the Charity Challenge we were not expecting to reach this amount. Due to the commitment of participants plus ILNS staff we exceeded our goal of $3500. We want to thank those who made a financial contribution in support of ILNS.

Randy Reede- Information /Outreach Coordinator

"I was extremely proud to help represent ILNS on the Bluenose Marathon 10K Charity Challenge"- Tim

Tim Martin



Downtown Halifax during the Bluenose

UN Special Rapporteur Surprised by Canada's Performance on the CRPD

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

In Winnipeg, Manitoba on 6-7 June 2014, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), a national organization working for an accessible and inclusive Canada, held a meeting of its National Council of Representatives, which focused significant attention on readying the organization to begin the work related to a future submission of a shadow report regarding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Steve Estey, Chairperson of the CCD International Committee, facilitated the National Council's deliberations on the CRPD. Mr. Shuaib Chalklen, UN Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, assisted CCD in its deliberations. Vangelis Nikias, CRPD Project Manager, participated to provide technical advice on the Convention.

Earlier in the year, Canada published the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities First Report of Canada*. Canada ratified the CRPD in 2010. Two years following ratification, a country is obliged to submit a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canada's report includes information from Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments.

The UN CRPD Committee will review Canada's report then issue questions and comments regarding Canada's progress on the human rights of persons with disabilities

Through shadow reports, civil society organizations have the opportunity to bring information beyond what is in a government's report to the attention of the CRPD Committee. Typically, in shadow reports, community groups address silences in a country report and clarify misleading information. CCD is looking forward to the shadow report phase of its ongoing work on the CRPD.

In preparation for this phase, CCD asked its member groups to review Canada's report and address the following questions: Do you find any major inaccuracies in what your government has said? Are there any major omissions? (i.e. information that you would have expected to see in the report but did not) Does the report ignore or violate the spirit of the CRPD?

In summary, the answer to these questions is that Canada's report by no means tells the whole truth, regarding the human rights story of Canadians with disabilities. The lived experience of people with disabilities was absent from the report. Through shadow reporting issues deemed important by community members can be put before the UN Committee.

While Canada ratified the CRPD, it has not yet ratified the Convention's Optional Protocol, which would allow Canadians with disabilities who have experienced human rights violations to take their concerns to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Optional Protocol establishes two additional mandates for the Committee: (1) The receipt and examination of communications from individuals or groups about rights violations and (2) The undertaking of inquiries in the case of reliable evidence of grave and systematic violations of the Convention.

During his presentation to Council, Special Rapporteur Chalklen, provided an overview of the situation of people with disabilities globally and how the UN has been responding to the disability community. He also commented on Canada's progress on disability rights. "I was surprised to hear yesterday that Canada did not ratify the optional protocol to the Convention. I'm really surprised by that. I'm very disappointed by that and that you have a reservation on Article 12 as well, stated Chalklen, "That's disappointing. I hope it changes in future that Canada withdraws the reservation on Article 12 and that they ratify the optional protocol, because that disempowers you considerably on two major achievements on a global level."

The UN Special Rapporteur is mandated to interface among Governments, the UN system and organizations of people with disabilities, to advance the disability agenda in the following areas

(a) Raising awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other UN frameworks;

(b) Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development programs;

(c) Promoting inclusive international cooperation;

(d) Collaborating with stakeholders, including organizations of persons with disabilities.

Following the Council meeting, Steve Estey, Chairperson of the CCD International Committee, travelled to New York to participate in the 7th UN Conference of States Parties. The thematic discussions for this session were: incorporating the CRPD provisions into the post-2015 development agenda; youth with disabilities; and national implementation and monitoring.

Shuaib Chalklen (centre left) and Tony Dolan, CCD Chairperson, (centre right) toured the Canadian Museum for Human Rights when they were in Winnipeg on June 5, 2014.

Nomination Committee Report

On behalf of the nomination committee, I present these motions to the 2014 annual meeting of Independent Living Nova Scotia Association:

1. That Lois Miller be elected to her second term on the board of ILNSA.
2. That Sheldon Higdon be elected to his first term on the board. Sheldon, who holds a B.Sc. in pharmacy, brings to the board life experience as a self-manager and self-advocate, and organizational experience from his service on the boards of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and Boccia NS Association.
3. **That Independent Living Nova Scotia heartily thank its outgoing board co-chairs, Brian Hennen and Jimmy Arnott. Brian has brought wisdom and passion to the organization, along with his significant professional and personal connections in the community. We are pleased that Brian will continue as past-president for a short time while he completes some current projects. Jimmy has served for three terms on the board, and has shown leadership in dealing with complex issues both locally and nationally. Best wishes to you both as you leave for further adventures.**

Please note that board members Murray Vandewater and Steve Estey are going into the final year of their last two-year term; that Sarah Dubé is going into the second year of her third term; that Robert Ganong, Louise Gillis and Patricia Gates are going into the second year of their second terms and that Jeremy MacDonald is on leave of absence. These board members do not need to be re-elected at this time.

As nomination committee members, Steve Estey and I have spoken personally with a number of potential board members who have, to date, respectfully declined to join the board. We continue the process of recruitment for additional board members who are prepared to show leadership within our organization.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Miller

Presentation of Auditor's Report for FY 2013/14

FY2013/2014 reviewed by Mitchell L. Miller CA

Total assets were about $ 212,990. Cash and securities were approximately $181,348. HST recoverable was about $ 4,725. There was $108,656 in deferred income for projects for which we have received the funds but the projects are not completed. There were about $ 13,365 in Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities. Employment severance "wind up" reserve was $42,500. All payroll remittances to Revenue Canada are submitted through the payroll system and were up to date.

Total revenue for all projects to the end of FY 2013/14 was about $679,823. Revenue declined about $13,520. Much of this decline in revenue is attributed to Independent Living Canada's (ILC) reduction of $16,297. There will be no ILC contribution by 2014/15.

Total expenses were about $ 699,095 or an increase of about $4,800. We have a deficit of about $ $19,272 which is about $10,000 more than was based on our internally prepared statements. In part this deficit can be attributed to timing issues as about $11,000 was removed from revenue as it was included in revenue for this fiscal year when it should have been in 2014/15. This has resulted in our net assets declining by about $10,000 which was projected.

The loss of ILC funding without other revenue sources identified is having a negative impact on ILNS financially. The ED will have to identify where financial efficiencies can be identified in FY 2014/15 as this continued yearly operating deficit is not sustainable. In particular the ED will have to assure that our own bookkeeping is accurate in reflecting our true position such that errors in revenue allocation are minimized.

The Board, with the Executive Director, will need to continue to look at increasing funding sources and areas where partnerships and cost efficiencies can be identified.

No other financial issues were identified. All accounts had been balanced and reconciled.

Respectfully submitted,

V.M. Vandewater

Treasurer

030614

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