

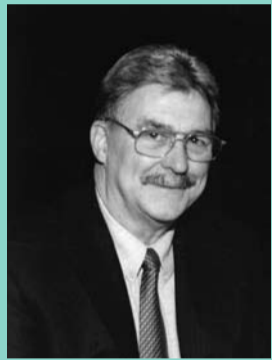
Our Vision . . .

People with developmental disabilities as leaders and partners in a world without barriers.

Our Mission . . .

To provide funding and to enhance supports to create inclusive communities for adults with developmental disabilities.

Message from Board Chair, Paul Renfree



The Northwest PDD Board is now in the final stages of developing our 2007 – 2008 regional plan. Again this year, Board members visited many communities

across the north meeting with individuals, families and support workers to find out what is working for people with developmental disabilities and what needs to be improved. We heard that most individuals feel they are getting the support needed from PDD and the community but there is a major

concern about recruiting and retaining quality staff.

As we traveled throughout the Northwest, we met some wonderful people and listened to some great stories. It was a real privilege for me and the other Board members to participate in these meetings. We all particularly enjoyed the opportunity to renew old friendships and establish new ones.

Over the next couple of weeks, I will also be meeting with Northwest service providers and the Northwest Advocates in Action in order to get ideas that will shape the way we work for people with developmental disabilities across Northwest Alberta.

We realize that we have still some challenges ahead but I'm encouraged that individuals, families, service pro-



Northwest PDD Board members met with stakeholders across the region to discuss plans for the future.



viders and communities are all working together to solve the problems.

The Christmas Season has now arrived with lots of snow and cold weather. On behalf of the Northwest PDD Board and staff, I wish to extend to each and every one of you a Christmas filled with happiness, good cheer, God's grace,

togetherness, peace, and above all, love for one another. May the New Year also be filled with happiness and bring you even closer to fulfilling your dreams.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Stories from Self Advocacy Summit 2006: Raise Your Voice for A Better Tomorrow



Ann Bettenson

What I thought about the summit this year was fun. I got to see some new and old faces. I got to meet some new friends and I seen some old friends. I enjoyed the group meetings. Some of the groups that I went to were the Pro-Stars and Action Hall Talk they had on Saturday morning. Each group talked about what they have been doing in the area that they live in. It was neat to hear what they are doing and what they have done all ready. That afternoon, I went to the Communication session. They talked about PDD and how they are doing with their jobs. I thought it was interesting to hear what some of the ideas that people had. I thought the dance was good. I missed the talent show. The one thing that I

was mad with was when somebody has a coat or a bag on a chair then somebody else takes that chair. Hope that for the next one that people will see that they took somebody's chair. I thought the summit went well. There were some changes that I would have made. I hope that I will see everyone soon at our Spring Celebration that we have every year.

Paulette McGinnis

My name is Paulette McGinnis I have attended the summit on September 29, 30 and Oct. 1/06. What I have experience this year was that I was asked to be the master of ceremonies with Tia Nellis from Chicago, Illinois another self advocate. Our theme for that event was on Pride so Tia and I got the crowd talking about Pride it turn out really well. I was able



Paulette McGinnis (left) from Grande Prairie was the Keynote co-speaker along with Tia Nellis from Illinois at the 2006 Self-Advocacy Summit.

to socialize with other self advocates that came from different area. The next day I went to different sessions such as housing and also, I had our group Pro-Stars do a session on how they started with self advocacy and what has changed for them since being in the group. It was really nice to meet old friends and meeting new friends it is all about speaking out about issues that concerns us as people with disabilities. The best thing that I really like is when we went to the park and did a rally so when people that walked by and drove by seen those we were raising our voice and letting them know that we are part of this society.

Michael McGinnis

My name is Michael McGinnis I have attended the summit on September 29, 30 and Oct. 1/06. I have learned about issues on housing there are people at the summit discussing about how the rent is so high. We did a session on our group called pro-stars about how we started and I told the audience how our group gets together and talk about other issues. We also talked about our rights and also, met other people at the summit everyone that was at the summit went to the park and had a rally at the park.

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Northwest Family Voices Connects Families

Family Voices has an initiative with the Peace Country Health Authority to connect families of developmentally disabled individuals across the Northwest region using the Telehealth system. This has been the perfect opportunity to link families in outlying, rural areas, who otherwise would not be able to be a part of the meetings due to vast distances and sparsely populated areas within the NW region. Families have been "grabbing on" to this idea and are excited to be a part of meetings (via video-teleconferencing) that are literally brought right to their doors, without having to drive long stretches in often poor weather and road conditions. Virtual meetings have provided an optimal setting for urban and rural communities to unite. The bridging of communities using the Telehealth System and the use of the hospital boardrooms for our Family Voices meetings have all been generously donated by Northwest's Peace Country Health Authority. At monthly Family Voices meetings (3rd Thursday of every month), presentations by guest speakers have been given to families on pertinent

issues affecting their children, such as inclusive post secondary education, quality respite services, transitional planning from child to adult services, the new Family Support for Children with Disabilities Act, etc. Parents have had the opportunity to give and receive information and ask questions of the Northwest Regional Authorities of Children Services and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD). Family Voices is also currently organizing a conference or series of workshops to be hosted in the northwest.

If you are interested in joining the Family Voices Northwest network, or if you have any questions, please contact us by giving us an email or a phone call.

You can contact Family Voices' Northwest co-chair Monica Rowson by email (rowsonf@telusplanet.net) or by phone ((780) 532-7083) during daytime hours.

You can also phone Family Voices' central office (1-800-252-7556 ext. 233) and someone will get back to you with phone information for your region.

Rural development fund ready to roll out to communities

Rural communities have access to \$100 million in rural development funding after the Alberta government transferred financial support to Rural Alberta's Development Fund for distribution to rural initiatives across the province.

Rural Alberta's Development Fund is an arm's-length, not-for-profit corporation that is administering the \$100 million in funding announced in Budget 2006 as the next step in the delivery of the Rural Development Strategy.

Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development said this funding emphasizes the government's commitment to ensuring Alberta's rural communities remain prosperous. "Rural Albertans have an incredible amount of innovative ideas and community commitment," said Horner. "This fund will provide the necessary financial backing to get those ideas off the ground and into

real projects that will mean a real difference for rural communities."

Clint Dunford, Minister of Economic Development, said: "We believe this Fund is the right mechanism for community partnerships to drive rural economic development," said Dunford. "The government is the catalyst that has made these funds available, and the board of directors has the knowledge and authority to make decisions that support growth, revitalization and sustainability in rural Alberta."

Fred Estlin, Fund co-chair and Grande Prairie resident said: "We're very pleased to have this level of support from government. We encourage rural organizations and groups to look at the program criteria and submit their Expressions of Interest to us."

Project criteria, guidelines and forms are available at www.ruralalbertas-fund.com or by calling Rural Alberta's Development Fund toll-free at 1-877-940-7233.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 31, 2006:

PDD Provincial Program's Community Research Program

Deadline for proposals is open
For more information: (780) 427-1177
www.pdd.org/crp

January 8, 2006:
Grande Prairie

Northwest PDD Board Meeting

Board meetings are open to public
For more information: (780) 624-6225

January 31, 2007: Grande Prairie
February 1, 2007: Peace River

Nathan Ory Workshop – Hosted by the Northwest Alberta Children and Youth with Complex Needs Initiative

This workshop will be for parents, professionals, paraprofessionals and administrators struggling with complex or challenging behaviors in children/youth and wanting practical approaches.

April 18 – 20, 2006:
Kananaskis

Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS, formerly AARC) annual Conference

For more info, visit www.acds.ca



NORTHWEST PDD WANTS TO KNOW: WHO IS YOUR HERO?

We would like to have a special section in an upcoming edition of the PDD Voice, Northwest PDD's newsletter, and we need your help. Northwest PDD wants to know who your hero is, and why he or she is your hero.

A hero is someone who is important to you and who has made a difference in either your or someone else's life. Heroes come in many forms, shapes and sizes and they can become heroes for many reasons. We would like you to tell us about someone who is a hero to you and we will put it in an upcoming newsletter.

Write us a letter telling us who your hero is and why they are special. If you would like to send us a photo of your hero as part of your story, we may use that as well – we will also return the photo to you. This invitation is open to anyone including self-advocates; family members and service provider staff.

Please mail, fax or email your hero stories by January 31, 2007 to:
Marla Forman
PDD Northwest Alberta Community Board
Bag 900 – 27
Peace River, AB T8S 1T4

Phone: (780) 624-6201
Fax: (780) 624-6122
Email: marla.forman@gov.ab.ca

