



## CL Brandon determined to reach out to new families



I would like to welcome anyone finding their way to the Spring 2013 newsletter from Community

Living Brandon ~ whether you have found it through a Facebook link, a Tweet or through a letter circulated to families.

We are not a new organization, but rather, a facelifted, solid old organization! Community Living Brandon has been around for 56 years, and the dedicated women and men who have created most of our community's resources for children and adults with intellectual disabilities have been members of or affiliated with Community Living Brandon.

On our board today, Pat Gouldie, Joyce Stovel and Marion Robinsong are incredible women who have just refused to see the organization disappear

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in our community. They provide a foundation for those of us who are new to CL Brandon.

As an organization, CL Brandon is very determined to find ways to reach today's families who are living busy lives, and balancing the needs of a family member with an intellectual disability with the many demands

on families in our busy society.

We want to use the technology that is current ~ so have created a Facebook and Twitter account, and an interactive website. (We also have a phone number 204-724-2348!).

We hope to respond to the needs of families for information, advocacy, and support.

We also want to find ways for families to connect with each other and benefit from mutual experience and sharing.

We welcome all feedback, and hope that you will feel that we are a responsive organization, that reflects your reality and responds to your needs.

Please get in touch and stay in touch!

Debby Coombs-Dandy,  
President

*“There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more.”*

~ Robert M. Hensel

# Discussion/Feedback Topics

**We encourage your feedback on the following three topics we are featuring in this newsletter. Look on Facebook for Community Living Brandon and Twitter for CLBdn for ongoing discussion.**

## Creating Natural Relationships From Childhood

We are all part of a community and rely on family, friends and acquaintances that exist there to provide us with friendship, social experiences, help, advice, comfort, love.

From these relationships we gain a sense of who we are in the bigger world, benefit from contributing to the world of someone else, fill valued roles in our communities, help others by offering them comfort and advice.

This interrelatedness of people in relationship is critical to well-being ~ physical, emotional, spiritual and functional.

Ensuring that these natural supports exist for individuals who live with disabilities is

critical to their well-being, and contributes to the well-being of a diverse community, rich in relationships between people, regardless of their abilities.

Achieving a rich tapestry of relationships around people may be challenging.

Community Living Brandon is concerned about building a community with relationships around each person with an intellectual disability, through all life stages, so that they can enjoy the benefit of the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being which comes with them.

We are interested in hearing from families about any assistance they feel they need in this area.

## Community Living ~ Brandon

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# Community Living Brandon ~ What Does An Advocacy Organization Do In 2013?

Community Living Brandon has been in existence for 56 years and has been the starting point of many services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities which have since become independent incorporated organizations ~ e.g. Beginnings Preschool Inc., Brandon Community Options, COR Enterprises.

Many of the services which exist today would not exist were it not for parents of individuals who were part of the early days of these services, and mem-

bers of the early Association for Community Living.

Over the last number of years, membership has dropped off, and activities have related more to fundraising, as Government has taken on service development.

This year, a new executive has been elected, and there is a wish to become engaged with families who are interested in working together on the issues which concern them in today's environment. It is not easy to bring people around a meeting

table, and it is our hope that by communicating through Facebook, Twitter and our website we can identify the issues that are relevant to parents and respond appropriately.

We have an interest in bringing speakers, education events, information and resources to family members ~ in whatever medium works best.

We look for your comments, ideas, and conversation related to the kind of support, information, communication and knowledge families need and want.

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## Services For Individuals With Disabilities

Manitoba currently recognizes the work of staff in agencies and programs which provide residential and day services with an average starting wage of \$12.06/hour.

The academic requirement is a Grade 10 education, although many agencies require a Grade 12.

The low wages translate into a significant staff turnover, and a low level of education in entry level staff.

Agencies do their best to provide job specific training to staff.

The reality is that staff trained to work in residential settings, after receiving experience and gaining competence, are of-

ten lured away to the Regional Health Authorities or School Divisions where they can expect a much higher wage.

The consequence for individuals with intellectual disabilities living in supported residential settings is that their lives lack continuity, as staff come and go; their staff lack the educational qualifications that one might expect for valued work; and the staff in place are often marking time until they can move on to something else that can allow them to earn an income that they can live on and support a family.

As staff learn about the history of a devalued segment of

society, and how to change the perceptions of a modern society, we must question how the current government can feel the support needs of citizens of Manitoba with disabilities are not equal to other citizens who receive care in the system.

Community Living Brandon, local Community Living agencies, Community Living Manitoba, and other service providers seek ways to bring this important issue before the public, and move towards equity in the support given to financing the care needs of persons with intellectual disabilities.