

Report of the Chair

CLGS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JUNE 2021

An often used line from old TV shows that crossed my mind as we began preparing for this Annual General Meeting was, “When we last joined our heroes...”

Back in November 2020 at our last AGM, we had tentatively found our footing in dealing with COVID-19 and its impact on our staff, people supported, families, and the developmental services sector. I recall ending my address by saying, “We look forward to a time when we can gather together to celebrate the spirit of people supported, the compassion of our staff, and our collective triumphs over this unprecedented year.”

Now, with vaccinations moving ahead and more and more people receiving their vaccines, we may finally be seeing some light at the end of this long tunnel.

Of course, while the day-to-day focus of much of the world has been on the pandemic, we had no choice but to continue with our important work within that context. We have known for some time that change was coming to the Developmental Services sector, which is why we began laying the foundation that would support this change in order for us to be prepared – and we are.

The reform plan released last month by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services describes the expectations for our sector and makes the changes and new direction more concrete. It is titled “Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion”, and it presents a long-term vision for developmental services.

Over the next three to five years, we will be taking steps to improve services for people with developmental disabilities, and the people and communities who support them. This will be a plan for meaningful change that focuses on people and not systems, based on leading practices, to ensure, as the plan states, “people with developmental disabilities fully belong in their communities and are supported to live the lives they choose.”

Fortunately, we are ahead of this curve. We have launched new independent living models for people supported. These new independent models will mean we need to look at our day support services, to include a focus on developing life skills to help people live independently and have meaningful engagement in the community through jobs, friends, connections... the things many of us take for granted.

We have continued with our focus on quality assurance and continuous improvement and our Board has been pleased to receive regular reports on the improvement initiatives underway. This culture is becoming embedded in everything we do and it will serve us well in the coming months.

Two of the immediate actions in the MCCSS plan are to make it easier for people to access services and reduce service barriers for people through strategic partnerships. For us to ensure a clear path forward, we are launching our first strategic plan since 2009. We are fortunate to have a senior leadership team with collective experience in developing strategic plans.



This will be a highly engaged process - we will be seeking the input of the people we support, families, staff, management, and partners. This will be a valuable exercise on many levels, and we are eager to get to work. We hope to hear candid and honest responses to our questions on how and where we can enhance or improve our services, with a goal to set a direction that best serves people, families, employees and community.

You have often heard us talk about accountability. Its importance cannot be overstated, and it is a large part of the reason we are here as a Board of Directors. This strategic plan will be our way to report our progress to our funders and community.

With that, I want to come back to my first comment, "When we last joined our heroes." On behalf of our Board, and the community, we want to thank you. It is always the case that our accomplishments are not possible without the contributions of staff and management. Over the past year you have gone over and above. In exceptional times, you need exceptional people.

Lucky us. We have you.

Thank you.

PAUL DE LUISA
Chair
Board of Directors