



**Special
Interest:**

- TBFN's new value statements
- Family Networking
- What is a personal support network?

Thunder Bay Family Network is an affiliate of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)

www.plan.ca

*"Nothing about me
without me"*

South African Proverb

Value Statements

Value statements are an expression of a company's, group, or individual's core beliefs. A declaration of value statements allow for everyone involved in an organization to be aware of the priorities and goals that drive the work being done. In essence, it speaks to the core beliefs held by an organization or group and articulates them in a way that others can understand and be motivated to follow. In June of this year, the Board of Directors adopted a series of vision statements that, along with the mission and goals, provides further clarification on TBFN's motivation and beliefs.

These new value statements are as follows:

We believe that families and individuals can best determine their own support needs.

We believe that innovative solutions can be discovered when families are engaged.

We believe that a network of families is stronger than one family in isolation.

We believe in unleashing the power of connections to build peace of mind, capacity, and relationships.

We believe in an inclusive community that supports diversity for all its citizens.

Family Networking

What is family networking and why is it important? As you may be able to tell from the new value statements, a core belief of TBFN is that the creativity and power of families is a great force that can lead to profound change in our society. The coming together of individuals in a common cause has, throughout history, demonstrated this. Movements, such as those that battle the stigma of mental illness, promote human rights, and aim to eradicate child poverty, have all had a significant impact on how the world views these issues.

The Family Movement has been with us for some time now and was a driving force behind community living and inclusion for those living with a disability. By coming together, families can share their joys and sorrows, creativity and difficulties, and

motivate each other in ways no one else can.

The Connection Café, held the second Wednesday of each month (from 12pm-2pm at the Northwood Kinsmen Centre), provides an opportunity for families to connect with each other. It also allows TBFN to remain up to date on what issues are affecting families and how we can attempt to respond. What workshops would families benefit from? How will things change with the new Disability Act? How have you handled a difficult situation and what strategies can you share?

We hope that you will consider dropping by to join the conversation and expand your own personal network of support!

I CAN! Program

We have had a busy few months at ICAN! with many different activities and friends dropping by to help out. But I cannot speak of ICAN without first acknowledging the amazing contribution of our dedicated and hard-working volunteers. The formation of the ICAN Working Group has far exceeded my personal expectations and I cannot even begin to express my gratitude. This group has taken a strong leadership role in planning, facilitating, and promoting ICAN! Each of you has a passion and drive that inspires me and, on behalf of everyone at TBFN, I want to thank you for all your efforts. There are many others who have provided support through donations, time, ideas, and talent and my profound thanks to each of you as well. I look forward to our continued success!

Recently, we had the opportunity to invite Shaw Cable 10 to one of our ICAN! evenings. Everyone was so excited to be part of the taping and the story that ran on Shaw Cable really

highlighted all that TBFN does. A big thanks to all our media stars for participating!

Please visit our online calendar at www.tbfn.ca for upcoming activities. ICAN! is held each Wednesday from 7pm-9pm at the Northwood Kinsmen Centre. The first Wednesday of each month is an outing within the community. The cost per visit is \$3 or \$10 for a month. Anyone over the age of 12 is welcome. If you, or someone you know, has a special talent to share with our ICAN! group, or would like to volunteer in some way, we would love to hear from you. For more information please contact Sharon Bak at sharon@tbfn.ca or 577-0034.



Kim eagerly awaiting movie and popcorn night

**I CAN Hope!
I CAN Dream!
I CAN Achieve!**



Katie and Erin enjoying a favourite game!

What is a social support network?

Most of us have informal social support networks – persons we count on and confide in; people who help us out. They are our relatives, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Unfortunately, many marginalized persons don't experience the support provided by relationships. Professionalized systems of care can sever their connections with those who would otherwise be in relationship with them; and societal attitudes towards people who are marginalized pose additional barriers.

It is possible to address these challenges through the facilitation of social support networks. The term "social support network" as used in this context refers to a group of committed men and

women who are in a relationship with a person who is isolated and vulnerable by reason of disability, age, living arrangement, limited opportunities, or society's perception.

Social support networks have become a powerful tool for creating a safe and secure future for marginalized persons. They spell the difference between living on the edge of community and being actively included in it. They welcome and connect people to the heart of community. They provide families with peace of mind.

Certain principles and concepts form the foundation upon which the social support network facilitation program is based. These principles

are the core values that guide the development of networks: Relationships are key to a good life; No disability precludes relationships; Successful networks are directed by individuals and/or families; Networks focus on contribution, and contribution equals citizenship; Everyone benefits.

Networks benefit everyone involved: the person at the centre, families, friends, network members, and the community. The person at the centre enjoys a richer, safer life; families enjoy peace of mind; community members can participate in loving relationships with the person at the centre; network members have a place to develop connections with others. Weaving the ties that bind us in community and citizenship benefits everyone in the circle.

Message from the President

by Debra Johnsen

As the new Act unfolds, we are attempting to keep up to speed, so that we can be a resource for our membership. The family-to-family connections will be extremely valuable as the various new processes become reality. The Quality Assurance Measures of the Act will provide families with some peace of mind, but as with anything new, we will want to be sure that these are meaningful and respectful to individuals.

New applications for Adult Developmental Services for our region will be received by Developmental Services Ontario Northern Region, located @ 245B Bay Street, Thunder Bay,

ON (807) 345-6062 The new contact person for the Passport Program is Suanne White at the same address and phone number as above

Over the summer, we will be encouraging families to join us on the second Wednesday of each month for the Connection Café (next one is Aug. 10th from 12 to 2 pm) or join us Wednesday evenings for ICAN! This is an evening where you will be guaranteed to leave with a smile. Both events are to encourage individuals and families to connect with each other. As families, we share a unique bond and the Board of Thunder Bay Family

Network is working hard to provide networking opportunities that will further strengthen the family movement. By fostering greater communication and collaboration among families, educators, community services, business, healthcare and service providers, our community will be enriched in so many ways.

Thunder Bay Family Network has received its first charitable donation, in memory of Darlene Marcotte. Donations, such as these, are very much appreciated and directly benefit the building of support networks for families.

Message from Staff

by Sharon Bak

Over the past few months, I've had the privilege of spending a significant amount of time with many families and been a part of the development of support networks for their loved ones. Each family has had a unique focus for their network, but all are based in the desire to enhance the life of the person at the centre and create lasting relationships with them.

Throughout the time that I have spent with families, one word keeps coming to mind and that is 'love'. A small, simple word, but one that resonates throughout all of the families we support. To build a circle of support around someone is all about love. Every person in the world seeks it, deserves it, and is entitled to it. Whether it is love of family, friends, or a partner, there is nothing so simple to seek, and yet, for some, can be difficult to find. Networks provide a chance for love to shine, and create relationships that can last a lifetime.

When we say that networks benefit all involved, not just the person at the centre, this is not merely a statement. As I've become involved in the lives of families and their loved ones, I've found my own life has become richer. I smile more often, let the small stuff slide easier, and look forward to the new adventures each day holds.

I also can't help but think of how my own life has been enhanced by relationships. I've been lucky enough to develop strong friendships and have the support of a great family. One special friendship, with a young lady I previously supported as paid staff, has become a relationship that I treasure and often reflect on when I need an emotional boost.

How do I know that support networks work? Because each day it shines through, not only in my own life, but in the lives of all of our TBFN families!

*First say to yourself
what you would be; and
then do what you have
to do.*

Epictetus

Love

Thunder Bay Family Network

Mailing Address:

977 Alloy Drive, Unit
15
Thunder Bay, ON P7B
5Z8

Main Office:

Kinsmen Northwood
Centre
609 James St. N.
Thunder Bay, ON
P7C 4R2

PHONE:

807-577-0034

E-MAIL:

info@tbfnc.ca

Follow us on
Facebook at Twitter
(@TBFamilyNetwork)

For updates and a
calendar of events
please visit us at

www.tbfnc.ca

*"The future depends on what
we do in the present".*

Mahatma Ghandi

Thunder Bay Family Network

Our Mission:

*"We will nurture the
strengths, dreams and
enthusiasm of families,
creating inclusive, caring
lives for all members*

Our Goals:

*Peace of Mind
Relationship Building
Capacity Building*

The Final Word

An excerpt from Al Etmanski's book *Safe and Secure: Six Steps To Creating A Good Life For People With Disabilities*

Relationships and Contribution

Relationships play an important role in enabling our sons and daughters to contribute their gifts. From the comfort of supportive friends, family, and personal network members, people with disabilities can find opportunities to work, volunteer, create, inspire, care, serve, and contribute. Our family members make contributions in two ways:

Contribution of Doing – These are the action-oriented contributions we are most familiar with such as volunteering and working

Contribution of Being – These are contributions made by the majesty of our relative's presence. Being present is an important way for our family members to make their contribution. The exchange is fellowship and communion. Our relatives offer grace, caring, attentiveness, wonder, acceptance, silence, receptivity, compassion, inspiration, pleasure, gratitude, loyalty, and friendship. These gifts-often overlooked in our society-are critical to society's well-being. In fact, they are a necessary antidote to "too much doing".

That's What Friends Are For

There is something about being human that makes us yearn for the company of others, to be with and to be touched by our family and friends. Isolation and loneliness are devastating by-products of having a disability. We believe that these by-products are disabilities in and of themselves.

Loneliness can weigh even heavier when a person with a disability is served by a large, impersonal service delivery system which has little time or resources to focus on friendships. The only way to truly diminish this loneliness is by paying attention to caring relationships. Even though this may be challenging for both our family member and for us, it is critical for their future security and well-being.

The key to creating these connections is first, our willingness to *let* them happen and second, our effort to *make* them happen. All the riches of the world will not compensate for the security of being cared about. That's what families do. That's what friends are for.

