

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011



THUNDER BAY

Family Network

...nurturing strengths, dreams and enthusiasms

Special Interest:

- What's Happening
- Upcoming Fundraiser
- RDSP Update

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

www.plan.ca

"Nothing about me without me"

South African Proverb

We Want To Hear From You!

Thunder Bay Family Network is looking for your input on how we're doing. The Board would like to hear from you on how we can strengthen our commitment to becoming an effective network for families. Some of the questions we are considering include:

- Does our mission statement reflect who we are, as a family network?
- Are the purpose, philosophy and values of TBFN in step with

what families really want?

- Are we providing the right kind of activities and opportunities?
- How can we improve the role of Community Connectors?
- What would you like to see in the future?

The Board is currently in discussions with Lakehead University to assist in conducting a review. Stay tuned for more details

Annual General Meeting

We are very excited to announce the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) for TBFN! While an AGM does have several components to it that must be completed, such as the approval of financial statements, this will be an evening of fun and an opportunity to thank all those who have contributed their time and talents since TBFN's incorporation last May. Appetizers and conversation will be plentiful, as well as a special presentation by our

ICAN! group. Remember to purchase your membership prior to the AGM so that you can have your say in what's happening at TBFN. All members are able to add their voice through voting.

The AGM will be held on January 18th from 6pm-8pm at the Kinsmen Northwood Centre 609 North James Street.



Network News

As of the end of October, there are seven families working with TBFN to build personal support networks for their loved ones. Each network has a different focus that is unique to the individual at the centre (also known as the focus person). Although several networks are in the beginning phases of development, a few have a strong, core group of members already in

place. Over the summer months we have seen network members enjoy various activities with focus persons, including attending community events, playing music, and having BBQs. Several family members have gone on trips and the network engaged to provide peace of mind during their travels! This is the power of connections!

I CAN! Program

ICAN stands for Independence, Confidence, Achievement, and Networking. But what does ICAN mean to the people who participate? We spent some time chatting with those who come out and here is what they had to say.

David G: *"I like cheese. I like to see my friend Kim and my friend John. My favourite thing was baking because it was fun."*

Heidi K: *"It's a good hangout for me and my friends. I really liked the Halloween party we had here on my birthday. I liked going bowling and doing baking. I consider you guys all my family and we have good times together."*

Dona N. *"Volunteering is very rewarding to me."*

Tara L: *"I love it! I enjoy coming. I like being out with friends."*

Lori E: *"Are we going to ICAN?" is a regular Wednesday morning question at our house. My 14 year old son with autism enjoys the predictability of his schedules and routines and ICAN has*

become a valued part of his schedule. Both he and I enjoy attending ICAN - for my son it provides a much needed social outlet and for me it provides an opportunity to get to know and help other members of my community. The ICAN program provides an opportunity for individuals and their families and friends to meet in a safe, inclusive environment. I am thankful that my son has a place in the community where he can be himself, meet and enjoy the company of others!"

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 cost per visit is \$3 or \$10 for a month. Anyone over the age of 12 is welcome Sharon Bak at sharon@tbfn.ca or 577-0034.



Natalie and Yvette busy on Baking Day!



A spooktacular Halloween party!

Upcoming Fundraiser

The ICAN and Just For Fun group will be holding a bake sale and white elephant sale fundraiser on Saturday, December 10th from 11am-2pm at the Northwood Kinsmen Centre (609 North James Street). A variety of tasty treats will be available for sale! Anyone wishing to donate items for the white elephant sale (no clothing please) and/or the bake sale, is welcome to drop them off on Friday, December 9th, from 2pm-4pm or Saturday morning after 9am. All donations must be clean and in working order. If donating baking, please be sure to include an ingredient list. Hope to see you there! Any questions, please contact Jan (473-4043), Violet (623-0690), or Peggy (767-3152).

What is a Community Connector? These creative and energetic individuals are a valuable part of the work that TBFN does with families. Connectors are matched with families in order to facilitate the formation and maintenance of personal support networks. Although the specific work a Connector does for each family is very unique, there are some basic functions that all perform. These involve meeting and getting to know the family and focus person, facilitating network gatherings, inviting new people to participate in a network, maintaining contact with the family in order to ensure their needs are being met, and keeping accurate and up to date records on the activities of the

The Connectors Corner

network.

TBFN provides training and ongoing mentoring for all Connectors. Our Connectors have great connections within the community, believe that everyone belongs, and are able to see and nurture the strengths and gifts of everyone.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Community Connector, please contact us at info@tbfn.ca or by calling 577-0034.



Message from the President

by Debra Johnsen

Has someone turned up the speed of life?? Has the world just gotten more complex?? Is there a “tipping point” where it will all make sense at some point?? And...is it just me that’s feeling this way? Hopefully, I am not alone in these thoughts.

As a family member supporting an individual with special needs, I have become involved in a massive change movement – a shift of huge proportion – as to how all citizens are included in our community. The community living “veterans” who led this, years ago, are to be applauded and accoladed for their passion and vision. They are the true Hero’s! Our community is far richer.

We are in a time where a shift in thinking and doing must evolve. This is an evolution of the Community Living movement. It is a time when legislative bodies are seeking input from individuals and families to see how we can be better partners to each other. The old way of doing cannot be sustained. It is the start of a New Story for all of us – not just individuals with disabilities or their families – but a worldwide movement with each community being at the “heart” of it all.

There is an incredible resilience amongst individuals and families and while we have championed many challenges, there is, still yet, work to be done - that “tipping

point” is here and now. It is absolutely important for us, as families, to connect. What do we want to see for our son’s and daughter’s future?? How can we collectively get there??

Change is happening amongst the developmental services sector, and as individuals and families affected directly by this transformation process, we must absorb it all. The time has never been more right to connect with people who share similar thoughts, concerns, fears and need for peace of mind. Knowledge is Power. There is a renewed energy with exciting opportunities at our doorstep.

Message from Staff

by Sharon Bak

As I reflect on my own “network” of friends, family, co-workers, and community connections, I realize that it is easy to take for granted the relative ease in which I am able to bond with others over shared interests and ideas. When people hear of TBFN’s work, I’m often asked, “what is a network?” and “why does someone need that?” The short answer is that each of us are social beings who not only desire, but require, genuine

connections with others. I recently watched a YouTube clip of Judith Snow (speaker, author, and the first person in Canada to receive individualized funding) and was struck by her comments regarding the isolation of those that are, in her words, “labelled disabled”. Wonderful stories are beginning to emerge from the support networks being developed, and I feel the most significant outcome will be the decreased sense of isolation that

many of our focus persons experience. Networks build connections and create strong bonds between people; ones that are often difficult to facilitate in other ways. As many of you have probably experienced, families face increasing pressure to meet the basic needs of daily life for themselves and their loved ones. Support networks fill a huge gap in many people’s lives and benefit everyone involved. Networks work!!

Membership Reminder

Consider a membership with TBFN! Membership is a great way to join a growing network of families and like-minded individuals who are committed to creating a good life for individuals with a disability. Your contribution assists in the sustainability of TBFN as well as provides you with workshop discounts and more. For further information, please visit www.tbfn.ca or call 577-0034.

Safe and Secure: Six Steps To Creating A Good Life For People With Disabilities, is an excellent book that provides information and resources for future planning. Many of you may have already received a copy, which is free for families thanks to a grant from the Law Foundation of Canada. If you haven’t yet received this valuable resource, please

Safe and Secure

contact us. Several families have expressed an interest in working through the six steps as a group. If anyone is interested in doing so, please contact Sharon at 577-0034 or sharon@tbfn.ca



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@tbfm.ca

Follow us on
Facebook and Twitter
(@TBFamilyNetwork)

For updates and a
calendar of events
please visit us at

www.tbfm.ca

*"In every community, there is
work to be done. In every
nation, there are wounds to
heal. In every heart, there is
the power to do it".*

Marianne Williamson

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*

RDSP Update

The Federal Government is currently conducting a review of the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). The RDSP is a savings plan specifically designed for people with disabilities and is widely regarded as a major policy innovation and positive development in ensuring the long-term financial future of those with a disability. Everyone is encouraged to share their views regarding the RDSP. Comments can be sent via email to RDSP-REEI@fin.gc.ca or in writing to RDSP Review, Tax

Policy Branch, Department of Finance, L'Esplanade Laurier, 16th Floor, East Tower, 140 O'Connor Str., Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5. The closing date for comments is Dec. 16th, 2011.

Stay tuned as TBFN will be providing an information session on the RDSP once information and/or changes regarding the program are released.



The Final Word

Below is an excerpt from Tim Brodhead's paper, *Words and Actions: Creating a new Narrative for the Community Sector*. Tim is the past President and Chief Executive Officer of The J. W. McConnell Family Foundation. In this paper, from 2008, he has crafted a compelling case for a new narrative:

"We are surrounded by change: sometimes it is so subterranean as to be almost imperceptible, sometimes it is dramatic and disruptive. We embrace it and we resist it. Mostly it seems to be happening to us rather than by us. Business, government and the voluntary or community sector struggle to make sense, to adjust, to innovate. Each faces challenges, but I want to focus particularly on what we must do in the community sector if we are to respond creatively and effectively, to be actors not victims."

You need to find 15 minutes of uninterrupted time to read it in its entirety! It's a small commitment to being a part of the solution. You can get the full text by clicking the link below or visiting www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Link: [Words and Actions: Creating a new Narrative for the Community Sector](#)



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