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New Age Services Inc. Annual Report September 2010

In September 2009 a group of New Age Service Inc. Stakeholders strategized to develop preliminary goals for the agency for the next 1-5 years. In the past New Age Services Inc. completed a PATH annually. The difficulty with this process was that the majority of the work that came out of the PATH ended up with the New Age Service Inc. Leadership team. The PATH although provided good information it did not include a process to minimize goals and concentrate on specific areas. The change to the strategic plan was to bring in stakeholders within the organization and the goals that were developed for the next 1-5 years would also elicit support from the strategic planning group in the form of working committees to ensure goals were achieved.

Peter Faid facilitated the strategic planning session on September 30, 2009.

People were able to articulate those things they were proud of as a stake holder of New Age Services Inc. These items included but were not limited to:

- The ability to be flexible, creative and understanding.
- The quality of work is exceptional
- The team work and accountability
- The diversity and the values evident throughout our work
- The opportunities for education – personal and professional
- My ability to mentor and teach and see great growth in our clients and in our staff
- The openness and friendliness.
- This is a family, and I enjoy coming to work
- The agency's ability to work with caregivers as a team and achieve what's best for the individual
- The amazing work, the dedication and loyalty of staff make such a difference.
- They're angels on earth
- The help I receive as a client. NAS really helped me out.
- I came to New Age Services Inc. by choice, as my friends spoke so highly of it

Participants

Directors: Rosemarie Painter and Helene De Klerk

Leadership: Darlene Walker, Norma Wisbling, Cheryl Cresine, Kathryn Senio

Staff: Michele Brown, Charlette Wolfe

Caregivers: Mary Dunn, Terra Gregory, Edna Desta

Clients: Kurk Stratychuk

Guardians: Mary Dunn

We revisited our Vision and mission and established Core Values:

Vision: People Working Together to Create Fulfilling Lives

Mission: We strive to ensure that adults with cognitive challenges receive care and support in order live full and valued lives.

Our Core Values

Respect: We believe all individuals have contributions to make and we strive to be supportive and accepting of everyone's unique situation. We acknowledge and respect diversity and different points of view.

Non-judgemental: We accept people for who they are with all their strengths and weaknesses; with all their challenges and gifts.

Dignity: We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and is worthy.

Spirituality: The belief in a power greater than ourselves allows us to achieve the goals of Giving, Altruism, and Growth.

Altruism: It is in giving credit to others, thinking of how our actions affect others, and believing in the value of all individuals that we can make a start. It is about being Unselfish concern for the welfare of others.

Quality: we focus on continuous improvement and the desire to provide a high standard in the work and interactions we are engaged in.

Ethical: We follow Best Practices Standards and adhere to all legislation that involves our work.

Safety: We strive to be safe, free from danger, risk, illness or injury.

Professionalism: A level of excellence that goes over and above the basic considerations. It gives credibility to our work and interactions with each other.

Trust: In our work and in our daily encounters with others we have a firm belief in honesty, integrity, reliability, and justice

Giving: We believe in being generous of spirit, charitable in your thoughts, emotions, and embracing the potential of others and ourselves.

Growth: Is a willingness to embrace our own potential. We need to be able to embrace self correction as part of the solution to continually become a better person.

How our World is Changing

Participants identified environmental changes that will have an impact on the agency over the next decade.

The following themes emerged:

- Our aging population

Challenges and opportunities

- Clients are aging and their needs are changing.
- Increasing medical issues means we will have to adapt our services.

- Recruiting and retaining qualified staff

We need qualified staff for mentorship, foundations and certified program training

Challenges and opportunities

- Wage parity does not exist and we can't offer a benefit package.
- We need to promote the field and find ways to get people to come, and stay.
- The absence of a pension plan may affect staff retention negatively.

- Changes in healthcare

Challenges and opportunities

- Demand will increase and there are not enough resources.
- If beds close, there will be an immediate influx of people who will need support from agencies, particularly people with mental health issues

- A need for more networking

Challenges and opportunities

- Not enough people are aware of what we do.
- There is a great need to increase our networking with others in the field

- Cuts to funding

Challenges and opportunities

- Less money creates an opportunity to be more flexible and realistic. We need to keep an open mind.
- Keeping qualified staff will be a challenge.

- Social issues

Challenges and opportunities

- There is a continuing controversy over the benefits of employment versus sheltered work and institutional living versus community inclusion.

- Population increases

Challenges and opportunities

- More people moving to Alberta will increase tax revenue.

- Recession and cutbacks

Challenges and opportunities

- It may be a challenge to find volunteers.
- Insurance costs are expected to increase.

-Employment rules may change, making it more difficult to include our agency.

- Becoming a learning organization

Challenges and opportunities

- As we learn from our mistakes, we are doing things better.

- One of our challenges is working for political change.

Clarifying our Strategic Directions

Attention then turned towards using what had been discussed so far to develop key considerations or strategic directions that New Age Services Inc. would have to address over the next few years.

- Quality staffing

Training and development of leadership, frontline workers and contractors

Creating more mentoring and learning opportunities to encourage people to work here

Determining how to recruit and retain qualified people

- Aging clients

Developing appropriate strategies, policies, practices and information related to aging; for e.g., death, moves, health

Seeking out partnerships and other ways to creatively support this population

Determining the skills and services this client group will need

Getting the word out about seniors with disabilities

Offering a continuum of care – what will this look like?

- Becoming more efficient

Focusing on efficiency without losing quality or understanding

Partnering with others is a possible option for increasing our efficiency

- Increasing public awareness of our services

Advertising the agency will increase access to funding, community support and opportunities for our clients

Improving awareness of NAS by the community and government will help to address funding cuts

We will need to improve our communications, both internally (newsletter) and externally in the community (advertising)

We need to increase our networking with other agencies

- Advocating

Making sure the client services coordinator is more aware of clients' needs on a personal level so more financial support can be obtained

Encouraging agencies, guardians and other stakeholders to work together as advocates for everyone in this field, with the objective of making wages fair for staff and funding available for clients

Some Possible Actions

1. What actions should we be recommending that would enable NAS to recruit and retain employees?

Advertising and promotion

- Publish a community newsletter specific to NAS and our client group
- Create partnerships with businesses by explaining what we can do for them
- Put up a billboard indicating when we will be in a community, as a way to inform and introduce NAS and community disability services to the community at large
- Advertise in free newspapers and on the Internet
- Attend job fairs
- Present information to classes at universities, colleges and high schools
- Spread the news by word of mouth

Mentorship

- Finalize and implement our structured mentorship program
- Continue the basic training, but expand it to include mental health, physical health, universal precautions and legal needs and issues
- Expand the mentorship program by partnering with other agencies
- Connect with other agencies and pool resources for training and hiring activities
- Introduce a student practicum for students at colleges and universities

Hiring and Retention

- Introduce hiring incentives, such as spa memberships after six months of service
- Take steps to recognize current staff

What actions should we be recommending that would enable NAS to better meet the needs of our clients as they age?

What will be the focus for the next 1-5 yrs:

1-2 Years

- Develop a care-giving or resource centre for people with developmental disabilities who are aging
- Implement medical support plans for all clients

1-3 Years

- Develop detailed training and resources for age-specific challenges; for example, personal directives, mobility, dementia, personal care, etc. Create a binder of these resources for applicants and to use when seeking funds
- Participate in and send staff to in-service training sessions on dying and aging
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals in the community willing to focus on our client group; train these personnel as needed

3-5 Years

- Expand the care-giving model to all seniors to take advantage of the cuts to nursing home beds
- Seek partnerships with hospices, senior centres, nursing homes, etc.

2. What actions should we be recommending to increase government and public

awareness of NAS and the quality of its services and programs?

Information to Take to Others

- Take the message out to: the media (print and electronic), educational institutes, children's groups, disability services, government, fairs, and other events
- Approach the media to remind people what happened in the past with deinstitutionalization, to promote the agency's day-to-day work and bring awareness to the bottom line of hourly pay Relay stories about our agency and clients through free community papers
- Write letters to MLAs about the importance of increasing funds for education, transportation and other services and the reduction of poverty
- Participate in the Wish Foundation and service clubs such as Rotary and the Shiners'
- Rally and organize others to the cause, recognizing the strength in numbers

Information to Give to Others When they Visit Us

- Invite government representatives into our facility; provide them with training and information; let them meet our clients and professionals in a social setting
- Hold training sessions with guardians and families to help them understand how funding works
- Distribute information about NAS during other events, although it may require additional funding
- Invite the media to learn more about our positive successes

3. What actions should we be recommending to increase our efficiency by partnering with other agencies?

- Share relief staff by setting up a pool, but with the understanding that wage parity applies
- Share lists of resources, and develop training programs in partnership with other agencies
- Become involved in other organizations' working groups and committees
- Develop partnerships with others such as CHR, schools, children's programs, and seniors facilities and groups; seek partnerships with others for funding purposes
- Hold strategic planning sessions with other agencies without the presence of government representatives
- Consider developing a joint newsletter with other agencies
- Invite others to our fundraising and social events (golf, picnic, etc.)
- Explore interest in bulk buying of medical and office supplies
- Extend our mentorship program beyond the agency as a partnership funding proposal

4. What actions should we be recommending to increase opportunities for agencies, guardians and other stakeholders to be stronger advocates for both clients and staff?

Encourage dialogue between common stakeholders

- Hold annual or biannual meetings with agencies to review concerns and issues
- Expand by offering services to seniors in caregiver settings

- Encourage dialogue across common stakeholders and develop support systems
 - Hold information sessions, including with guardians and families of clients to help them understand community disability service provision and get involved in advocacy
- Prepare information for future advocacy role
- Prepare a package of information on advocacy and how people can participate
 - Provide form letters that people can copy or fill out and submit on specific issues
 - Publicize MLAs' phone numbers and use our newsletter to encourage people to contact them.

Long term Objectives:

1. Mentorship

- Finalize and implement our structured mentorship program
- Continue the basic training, but expand it to include mental health, physical health, universal precautions and legal needs and issues
- Expand the mentorship program by partnering with other agencies
- Connect with other agencies and pool resources for training and hiring activities
- Introduce a student practicum for students at colleges and universities

2. Grow the agency

- Expand the care-giving model to all seniors to take advantage of the cuts to nursing home beds
- Seek partnerships with hospices, senior centres, nursing homes, etc.
- Develop partnerships with others such as CHR, schools, children's programs, and seniors facilities and groups; seek partnerships with others for funding purposes
- Invite government representatives into our facility; provide them with training and information; let them meet our clients and professionals in a social setting
- Become involved in other organizations' working groups and committees
- Expand by offering services to seniors in caregiver settings
- Encourage dialogue across common stakeholders and develop support systems
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Summary of Year 1- 2010

1. *What actions should we be recommending that would enable NAS Inc. to recruit and retain employees?*

New Age Services Inc. continues to distribute a monthly newsletter to all of the stakeholders. The distribution list of stakeholders was updated. Any positions we have is advertised in our newsletter. It is our preference that we hire staff internally and if this is not a possibility then we ask if our stakeholders know of people who may be interested in applying. If this is unsuccessful we then utilize other resources such as the job bank, ACDS employment and career section, and Now Hiring job registry. Every month we have a staff of the month

recognizing peoples skill and commitment to working with people with developmental disabilities.

We have attended one client fair this year and have worked with the University of Calgary in having Practicum Students. Our last practicum student-Farshid Torouti- was recently hired as a team leader and we are thrilled to have in on board. Helene de Klerk who is presently a member of the Work force Council is part of a project that will be organizing an event for agencies to share their wares with the educational establishments within the city.

We are still in the process of finalizing and implement our structured mentorship program. We continue to provide informal mentorship and formal and mandatory training to all the staff. Planned Approaches are completed for all individuals who require this support and medical plans are in the process of completion for each client. Each individual coming into service does have a functional assessment completed and the program development and funding is based on the support needs derived from this assessment.

2. What actions should we be recommending that would enable NAS Inc. to better meet the needs of our clients as they age?

As already noted we are in the final stages of ensuring every person in our service has a Medical Plan. The medical plan is updated regularly and used as a training tool to ensure individual needs are met from a medical perspective.

Although we have not developed resources manual for age-specific challenges, New Age Services Inc. has had the Office of the Public Guardian present to us the information on personal directives; we have a Coordinator trained to provide both staff and clients grief counselling. We have had three of our individuals this year pass on this year, a physio-therapist has assisted us in training staff with safe mobility and transferring, we have also sent staff to find out information on the RDSP.

We are in the process of liaising with the Independent Living Resource Center to create a partnership where we are supporting our individuals with employment, life skills, recreation and self advocacy. We have also been asked by the Nunavut province to submit a proposal of taking in individuals into our support model and possibly working with the Iqaluit community to develop the support home model within that community. New Age Services Inc. represents people with developmental disabilities as a member of the Accessible Housing Working Committee as a beginning to seek partnership with senior organizations. Helene has also shared information with the Health Region on how the Support home model works and could potentially work for seniors and Helene has also participated in a meeting with the Calgary Health Region regarding an individual with disabilities but not fitting PDD criteria. Although we were not successful in acquiring this individual in our service it was a good opportunity to interface with other ministry services.