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# HAVE FUN: THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!



2016-2019

Community Living Atikokan Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan was developed with the assistance of Tom Little of CMCS Consulting Services, Oshawa, Ontario.

# HAVE FUN: THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The 2016 - 2019 strategic plan for Community Living Atikokan was created on Friday November 27 and Saturday November 28, 2015. Contributing to the discussion from the Board of Directors were Candy Lee - President, Jason Young - Vice President and Cliff Pointer. Their input was augmented by the three members of the CLA management team: Jim Turner, Christie Gushulak, and Tina McEvoy. Sian Krassey took notes.

In advance of November 27th, a survey was made available to all CLA staff and the Board of Directors. Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on what they liked about CLA and what they felt could change. Thirty-two people provided their ideas, and those ideas were referred to and utilized throughout the two days.

Tom Little of CMCS Consulting Services conducted the survey, facilitated the discussion and fleshed out the planning document based on the two days of input. The Board of Directors then reviewed Tom's draft and adjusted it as needed.



*CLIFF, TINA AND CANDY HARD AT WORK DEVELOPING STRATEGIC IDEAS*

The purpose of a strategic plan is to identify a few aspects of the organization that will receive special attention over the coming years. The plan does not explain everything the organization will do, just a limited number of actions that are considered to be especially important.

The new plan contains updated vision and mission statements for CLA. Those are followed by five strategic directions. Each direction is accompanied by goals and key actions.

The new plan also explains the timeframe for the plan, how the plan will be implemented and how it will be communicated.

## CHOOSING THE TITLE

As part of the process, the planning group took time to consider whether it would be helpful to create a title for the plan. In the end the group decided the plan should have one. A title would help ensure the plan was memorable and that it engaged the other stakeholders, especially direct support staff.

Ideas put forth included:

- ▣ The little agency that could
- ▣ Leading change
- ▣ Roadmap
- ▣ Perfecting change
- ▣ Have fun: The sky's the limit!
- ▣ Get good



The final decision of the group was that the title would be: *Have fun: The sky's the limit!*

The title is a reflection and confirmation of the approach to services that has been embraced by Community Living Atikokan over the three year period immediately prior to the development of this plan, an approach which it refers to as its “culture”.

Explains Executive Director Jim Turner: *The service culture has shifted in the last three years from control and care to independence and support. The focus is now on being person-centered, with each individual choosing how they live their lives. We support people to be present and engaged in the community, in accordance with their goals and wishes, and to live as independently as possible in housing that meets their needs and preferences.*

*Related to staffing, the emphasis is now on matching staff and people supported. At the same time, staff are being encouraged to have fun and be creative in terms of community engagement. “Have fun: The sky’s the limit!” has become the catchphrase used to rally and inspire staff.*

The title is a continuing call to action for both CLA’s Members and its staff. Life is about being able to make choices and being supported to act on those choices. And, of course, having fun along the way.



# COMMUNITY LIVING ATIKOKAN

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Community Living Atikokan (CLA) is a grass roots organization formed by families in 1969 to provide supports and services to people who have a developmental disability. Its name has changed over the years to reflect new thinking and new approaches.

Over the years, the services provided by CLA have also changed. Resources are now used to develop opportunities for individuals to experience growth, quality of life, inclusion and equality within the community. In contrast to earlier forms of services that emphasized standardized service options, CLA has moved to more “person centered” models built around the unique values, priorities, and preferences of each individual served. In keeping with this methodology, CLA places great significance on the matching of staff and people receiving support.

As part of providing progressive service, CLA plays an active role in identifying the needs of the twenty-five people it serves, and provides support to enhance independence and growth, using “positive approaches” in its residential services and supported employment, leisure and recreational programs.

Community Living Atikokan is focused on innovation, and its commitment to choice, community involvement and independent living, has garnered widespread recognition.

# ORGANIZATIONAL VISION AND MISSION

## ENSURING CONTINUED RELEVANCE

The first item of discussion was the organization's vision and mission.

A vision statement describes the world of the future that CLA is trying to create for the people it supports. A mission statement describes the actions the organization will take to make the vision a reality. Vision and mission statements explain in a few words what the organization does and why. They are best when they are easy to remember and when they motivate the people connected to it.

The current vision reads as follows: *Community Living Atikokan promotes an awareness of community where all people feel a sense of belonging and dreams are realized.*

The current mission is: *Community Living Atikokan is committed to providing respect, supports and services to meet the diverse developmental needs of the people within an inclusive community.*

To facilitate discussion, Tom provided sample vision and mission statements from another human service organization he had worked with earlier. After considerable and thoughtful discussion, the planning group proposed new vision and mission statements:

### VISION

*(THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR OUR MEMBERS - AND OTHERS CONNECTED TO CLA)*

***A MEANINGFUL LIFE: RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNITY,  
HAPPINESS, WELLBEING.***

**MISSION**

*(WHAT WE WILL DO TO MAKE OUR VISION A REALITY)*

***INSPIRE. ENCOURAGE. NURTURE.***

These statements will be embedded in the literature, website, signage and everyday work of the organization.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

By the end of two days of discussion, the planning group had identified five areas of focus for Community Living Atikokan over the next few years:

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

- 1) EMBRACE THE CULTURE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION***
- 2) RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALIFIED, DEDICATED STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND AND ARE COMMITTED TO OUR CULTURE***
- 3) BUILD ON THE STRENGTH OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS***
- 4) CONTINUE TO BE A SECTOR LEADER***
- 5) CELEBRATE 50 YEARS!***

The pages that follow outline the goals and key actions that will be undertaken to move in the directions set out above.

# DIRECTION #1

## EMBRACE THE CULTURE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

As noted earlier in the plan, the service culture at CLA has shifted in last three years from control and care to independence and support. The focus is now on being person-centered, with individuals supported deciding how and where they live their lives and on people being present and engaged in the community. For the organization, and its staff, this transition has required significant changes in how services and support are approached and delivered. Of

key importance to the planning group was ensuring that the person-centred approach to service permeated the agency and all program areas, and that staff received the ongoing direction and support necessary to “walk the talk”. As important as reinforcing the internal organizational culture, was ensuring the understanding and support of two additional stakeholder groups: the broader community and families of individuals supported.



### GOAL 1.1

**Staff are effective in ensuring Members choose how they live their lives and in connecting them to the community.**

#### Action:

- Continue:
  - To develop and utilize person-centered plans and to meet the goals they contain;
  - To hold one-on-one meetings between the Managers and individual staff members;

- Consistent messaging to staff pertaining to expectations that Members will have their say and that staff should be creative in connecting them to the community, while having fun at the same time;
- To use flexible schedules.

## GOAL 1.2

**Families understand and support the culture.**

### Action:

- Engage in frequent, consistent communication with families to reinforce the culture of the organization.
- Provide updates to families of the best practices utilized by CLA, including those that receive accolades province-wide.

## GOAL 1.3

**The community is informed about CLA's focus on Members' independence and support, and is encouraged to share in the various aspects of day-to-day life with the Members.**

### Action:

- Promote CLA during Community Living Month (May).
- Utilize social media.
- Continue the presentation of the Widening Our World (WOW) Award to local businesses.
- Continue to encourage the involvement of community members in CLA functions.



# DIRECTION #2

## RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALIFIED, DEDICATED STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND AND ARE COMMITTED TO OUR CULTURE



CLA's culture calls for staff who are comfortable with the concepts of independence, support and inclusion. Direction #2 is intended to ensure CLA has a staff complement with the skills and commitment to effectively deliver on its mission: *Inspire. Encourage. Nurture.*

### GOAL 2.1

**The recruitment process results in new staff with the abilities to maintain and enhance the quality of the services we provide.**

#### Action:

- Implement a pre-screening form to share with the local Employment Centre.
- Continue to encourage staff to participate in the Developmental Services Worker (DSW) apprenticeship program.

## GOAL 2.2

Qualified, committed staff stay with the organization.

### Action:

- Provide training opportunities.
- Identify additional ways to foster and ensure a positive work environment.

## GOAL 2.3

All staff (support workers and management) are valued as part of a collaborative team effort.

### Action:

- Engage in clear and honest communication.
- Continue with staff appreciation celebrations.
- Continue with staff excellence nominations and awards.



# DIRECTION #3

## BUILD ON THE STRENGTH OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Boards of Directors are comprised of volunteers who contribute their time free of charge. Those same Board members are ultimately responsible for everything that goes on within the organization, so the demands of the position are considerable. The purpose of Direction #3 is to help the Board do the best job possible, while recognizing the limited amount of time it has available for fulfilling its role.



### GOAL 3.1

**Board members are fully engaged.**

#### Action:

- Encourage and promote discussion of topical issues during board meetings.
- Continue to provide information in a timely fashion prior to board meetings so Board members can be prepared to discuss, and make decisions on, issues impacting the organization.

## **GOAL 3.2**

**New Board members undergo an effective orientation.**

### **Action:**

- Institute a practice of having the President and Executive Director meet with new Board members to review the Board Manual.
- Continue to provide an orientation to CLA's operations that includes a tour.
- Provide mentorship to new Board members.

## **GOAL 3.3**

**The Board is composed of its full complement of members.**

### **Action:**

- Re-establish a Nominations Committee.
- Recruit new candidates so that the number of Board members reflects the requirements of CLA's general by-law.

## **GOAL 3.4**

**CLA's general by-law is current.**

### **Action:**

- Review and revise the organization's general by-law as required on a regular basis.

# DIRECTION #4

## CONTINUE TO BE A SECTOR LEADER



CLA has demonstrated sector leadership in a number of areas, including its focus on Members having the say in how they live their lives, and on moving towards individualized support options. The intent of Direction #4 is to ensure that CLA continues to identify and implement changes that reinforce its leadership position.

### GOAL 4.1

**The organization is knowledgeable of trends in the sector related to both operations and governance.**

#### Action:

- Continue to network, access information, utilize training and form partnerships related to best practices in providing services and supports and in governing the organization.

### GOAL 4.2

**The organization continues to utilize best practices.**

#### Action:

- Based on the knowledge obtained in Goal 4.1, introduce new practices that are leading-edge and that enhance the work of the organization.

### GOAL 4.3

The organization shares and promotes its innovative approaches across the province and beyond.

#### Action:

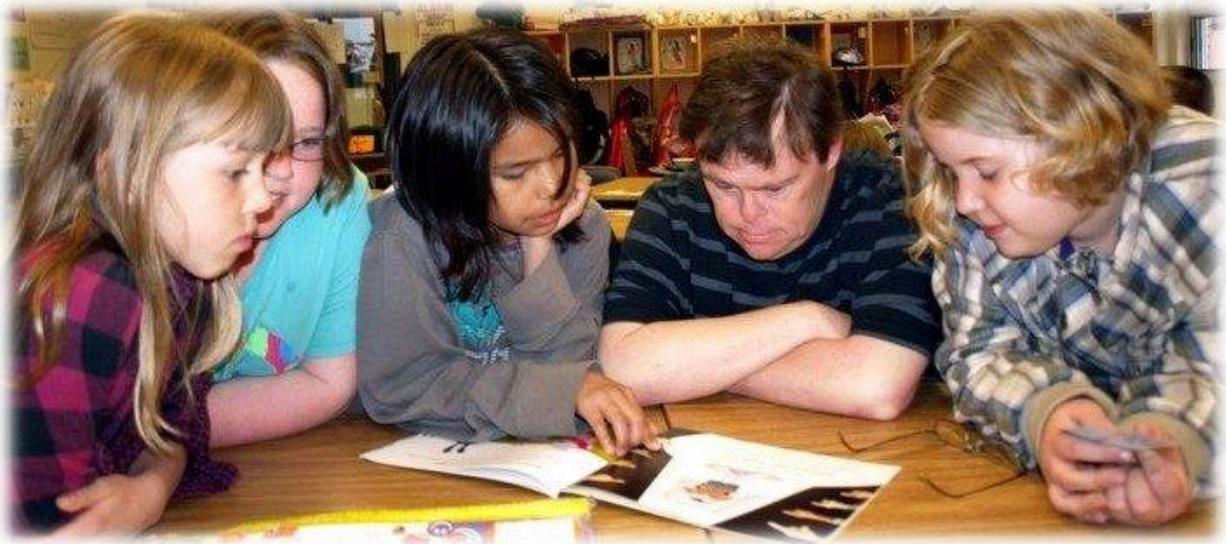
- Continue to disseminate information about CLA's approach through networking and partnerships.
- Continue to nurture and foster CLA's mutually beneficial relationship with MCSS.

### GOAL 4.4

CLA is an organization that continuously validates the contribution of all.

#### Action

- Continue to recognize, celebrate and share the contributions of everyone who helps make CLA a success in fulfilling its mission.



# DIRECTION #5

## CELEBRATE 50 YEARS!



In 2019, CLA will celebrate fifty years of service to individuals who have an intellectual disability. From a grassroots organization made up of a few committed, hard-working parents, CLA has evolved into a large, complex operation with a strong philosophy related to choice and inclusion. Fifty years of existence is a substantial accomplishment and it is important that this achievement be recognized.

### GOAL 5.1

Community Living Atikokan celebrates fifty years of providing services and supports.

#### Action:

- Form a 50th Anniversary Committee comprised of Members, staff, management and the Board to plan and oversee the 50th anniversary celebrations.



# TIMEFRAME

A strategic plan lasts several years, the exact number to be determined by those involved in creating and implementing it. This plan will take effect in January 2016 and will be in use until December 2019.

In the event the plan is completed by December 2019, a new one will be created in the autumn of 2019 for implementation starting in January 2020.

If the actions described above take longer to complete, the Board can decide to extend the end date of the plan beyond 2019.

This decision would most likely be made at the Board's year end progress review held in December of 2019.



# IMPLEMENTATION

Once the strategic plan is approved by the Board of Directors, it will be implemented as follows:

More detailed actions will be developed each year for achieving the goals. Included along with the actions, will be the identification of individuals responsible for each action and target dates for completion. Management will be responsible for all Directions except Direction #3, which falls to the Board.

For all Directions except Direction 3, the results will be reviewed by the management team on a regular basis. The Executive Director will update the Board semi-annually on the completion of actions and meeting of goals.

The Board of Directors will develop a yearly action plan for the goals specific to Direction #3, setting out target dates and noting individuals responsible to ensure the goals are met. Results will be reported to the Board on a regular basis, and the Strategic Plan will be an ongoing agenda item for Board meetings.

Implementation will include the new vision and mission statements. Like the five strategic directions, their adoption, dissemination and utilization will require a plan as well. The management team will take the lead in developing such a plan and reporting on progress.

# COMMUNICATION

Once the draft plan has been discussed by the Board, changes are made and the final version is approved, the organization will move into communication mode.

The first step will be to advise staff of its contents at a general staff meeting. As soon as the implementation plan is completed, it will be shared as well, and staff will be advised of those parts of the plan that they will be involved in. It will be especially important that staff are made aware of the new vision and mission statements.

The strategic plan and progress reports will be part of subsequent staff meetings and will be the subject of emails sent by the management team as appropriate.



As long as it remains in effect, the plan will be promoted through social media and on the CLA website.

The Board and the management team will provide the membership and the community with an update of achievements annually, as part of CLA's Annual General Meeting.