



Leaders Together



Leadership Today Society of Alberta
Annual Report
2006 - 2007

**Leadership Today Society of Alberta
Board of Directors 2006 - 2007**



**Paulette McGinnis
President**



**Doug Edey
Vice-President**



**John Goede
Treasurer**



**Alissha Schnell
Secretary**

Leaders Together



Mission

**To support Albertans with developmental disabilities
to lead and teach their communities**

President's Report



I have been on the Leadership Today board for the past five years and have been the President for the past three years, and I am feeling very comfortable in chairing board meetings. Our theme this year is "Leaders Together." The good things about being on the board are the learning process and the continuing challenges that I continue taking along the way, having the opportunity to see Leadership Today grow, and getting more and more graduates. My focus is helping Leadership Today grow and to promote it by doing community presentations and trying to get the communities more involved in supporting people with disabilities.

Being leaders together also has challenges. For me, some of the most challenging things in the President's role is that the board is made up of just self-advocates this year. Like other boards, we need to recruit board members, especially for legal matters. Some other challenges are the issues that need to be dealt with, making sure that the board understands what the policies and by-laws are all about, and making sure that we make good decisions for Leadership Today.

We need to have mentors when there are self-advocates on a board. The mentors could support the board members with the agenda and help the President understand the legal papers and other things that need to be brought up before the next board meeting. I know that mentors could make a big difference in helping us be good leaders together by supporting self-advocates to understand what needs to be discussed in every meeting, because I believe that my mentoring to the rest of the board has helped them to continue to learn to be better board members.

The funding to support Leadership Today to continue running is also an ongoing struggle, due to the fact that PDD cannot give us an increase every year. Costs go up for things like meetings and mailings to members. We also need funding for more staff so we could get more new courses going. Having enough money would mean that our Executive Director Sandra Mak could stay in the office and just do the Director's job, instead of other staff work as well.

At our board and staff retreat in December, we discussed solutions. We talked about how to get mentors or advisors for our board. We have already achieved that goal. We now have two advisors, Dolly McArthur from the Grande Prairie Regional College and Robert Steven from the Prairie Art Gallery. The advisors help us answer questions that the board may need advice on. We also talked about how to help self-advocacy groups in other ways besides our training. We are still

continuing to get funding through PDD and hopefully other sources, so Leadership Today will continue growing and getting more leaders to take the courses.

My main focus for Leadership Today is to continue trying to get chapter offices in each region. The graduates of Leadership Today could be teaching the courses and workshops with the assistance of supporters from their community. The graduates from Leadership Today will be able to use the skills that were taught to them and become better leaders by teaching the courses. The workshops that I really enjoy teaching are *Supporting Self-Advocacy* and *Partners in Advocacy*, because they show the staff and family members who take these workshops that people with disabilities are able and capable of making decisions and being leaders. If both the supporters and the graduates work together as a team, we will become leaders together. I feel that if there are people that are willing to assist the graduates from Leadership Today, those chapter offices could happen.

To our Executive Director Sandra Mak, thank you so very much for all you have done, your dedication and the hard work you always put into Leadership Today. Thank you, Sandra, for keeping a close watch on how the money has been spent and making sure that Leadership Today is operating well.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Noel McGarry for his support of Leadership Today throughout his time as the CEO of the South PDD Region.

I feel that Leadership Today will keep on growing and my dream is for the graduates of Leadership Today to continue to become leaders in their communities, continue believing in themselves, and that supporters and the community will help the graduates by becoming leaders together.

Paulette McGinnis



Left to Right: Sandra Mak, Paulette McGinnis, Alissa Schnell, Doug Edey and John Goede.

Goals From Our Retreat

- Plan for the future and manage risks
- Find new board members
- Find mentors for the board
- Be prepared for meetings
- Find money in other places
- Promote our training
- Support the self-advocacy movement

Executive Director's Report

It has been a year where being leaders together has been more important than ever. We worked together with community agencies and PDD to offer a record-breaking 22 courses and workshops this year! Working together with Paulette McGinnis this year was amazing because she found her groove as our board President. She does a great job of chairing meetings, supports her fellow board members with tremendous effort, and provides me with unending support in my job. Paulette, in many ways, is my role model—she never gives up and always has a positive attitude.



This year was also filled with more than the usual challenges and changes. We were short-staffed for a period of time. There were also many changes at Provincial PDD; we have a new Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, Greg Melchin, and many of the regional PDD board members finished their terms, like Don Schultz and Sharon Rowntree. So it has been a year filled with making new relationships and saying good-bye to old ones. In particular, I want to thank Gail Davis, Noel McGarry and Garry Donald—they have all helped me by being leaders together in building Leadership Today since 1998.

The ongoing commitment of PDD and community agencies, as well as Kathleen's help, have allowed Leadership Today to continue to grow this year. It is a pleasure to work with so many great leaders.

In my travels throughout Alberta, I get to see the work of the self-advocacy movement blossom. The supporters of the movement along with the many Leadership Today graduates are, to me, the definition of being leaders together. Being leaders together is a great thing, but with it comes much hard work, incredible dedication and a “never give up” attitude. The work of supporting self-advocacy is uplifting, inspiring and never-ending. There are always more people who can learn to be leaders together, and I am particularly proud of our new two staff workshops, *Partners in Advocacy* and *Supporting Self-Advocacy*. These workshops will, hopefully, teach people how to truly be leaders together.

Along with my board, I have worked on plans for how to better partner with the regional PDD Community Boards and community agencies to support people after they have taken training. We are also trying to connect with other disability-related organizations to promote and support leadership and self-advocacy in Alberta. We talked about partnering with a community agency to get more trainers to offer more courses and workshops, and we have been working with the Provincial PDD Program to develop a provincial network to

represent self-advocates in a more coordinated way in Alberta. We continue to work very hard to increase the profile of self-advocacy and leadership for people with disabilities and to define Leadership Today's role in the self-advocacy movement. We sent in a proposal to PDD's Community Research Program to get funding for a project to support self-advocacy groups to have a stronger voice. This year we also made more community presentations than before, with the result that we had more individuals and community agency staff participate in our classes.

A particular challenge has been working with a self-advocate board, and we continue to recruit new board members. In our board and staff retreat this year we asked the question, "What makes Leadership Today special?" Some of the answers were

- We change people's lives.
- Graduates believe in themselves.
- Our training gives people tools.
- Our training shows us we have talents.
- Sandra includes and encourages us. She treats us as equals.

I truly believe that these are the things on which Leadership Today was founded and I look forward to another year of being leaders together and making this foundation even stronger.

As usual, I would like to give a special thank you to the graduates of Leadership Today. It is because of you that, no matter what the challenges and changes, I always remember why I do what I do. So continue to believe in yourself and speak from your heart, and I will do the same.

Please come and celebrate with us next year at our 2008 AGM and 10 year anniversary celebration. Wow! I cannot believe that we have been around for almost 10 years, and I hope we can continue to be leaders together for many more years to come.

Sandra Mak



Training People to Lead Together

Training is what Leadership Today does, but people leading together is our goal. We want Albertans with developmental disabilities to be leaders in their lives and in the community. But no one is a leader alone.

This year we added our fifth course, called *Supporting Self-Advocacy*. This full-day workshop for staff, families and interested community members shares what we know about supporting others to say what is important to them and make a difference in the world. Our graduate co-facilitators speak from the heart about their experiences, the support they have gotten and what it has meant in their lives.

Just as self-advocates cannot lead alone, Leadership Today cannot teach alone. We have many people who work together to make our courses happen. This year, 13 graduates taught peers, staff and others in a record 22 Leadership Today courses and workshops. Four PDD regions and an agency sponsored our courses. Some agencies provided space and refreshments for staff workshops. Staff in several agencies coordinated registrations and arrangements. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with them.

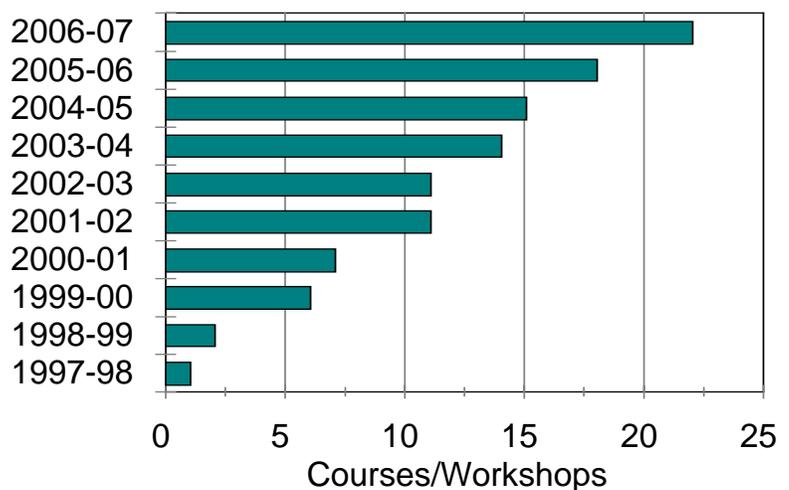
We Thank Our Partners This Year

- Alberta Seniors & Community Supports - PDD
- PDD Central Alberta Community Board
- PDD Edmonton Region Community Board
- PDD Northwest Alberta Community Board
- PDD South Alberta Community Board
- Camrose Association for Community Living
- Central Alberta Residence Society (CARS)
- Edmonton Integrated Services
- Signature Support Services
- Southern Alberta Individualized Planning Association (SAIPA)



Courses and Workshops

By Year



Leadership Today Training April 2006 - March 2007



Central Region

April 2006

Leadership Training - Camrose

October 2006

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Camrose

January 2007

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Red Deer

Partners in Advocacy - Red Deer

February 2007

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Wainwright

March 2007

Leadership Training - Red Deer

South Region

May 2006

Leadership Training - Lethbridge

November 2006

Train-the-Trainer - Lethbridge

January 2007

Leadership Training - Lethbridge

February 2007

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Lethbridge

Partners in Advocacy - Lethbridge

Inclusive Boards - Lethbridge

Northwest Region

December 2006

Partners in Advocacy - Grande Prairie

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Grande Prairie

February 2007

Train-the-Trainer - Grande Prairie

March 2007

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Grande Prairie

Edmonton Region

May 2006

Supporting Self-Advocacy - ACDS Conference

September 2006

Train-the-Trainer - Edmonton

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Edmonton

February 2007

Leadership Training - Edmonton

March 2007

Supporting Self-Advocacy - Edmonton (2 sessions)



We Thank Our Graduate Trainers This Year

- Michael Boyd
- Randy Chandler
- Jeff Helm
- Nicole Hopke
- Janine Kroy
- Paulette McGinnis
- Ray Remington
- Lana Rutledge
- Melody Scout
- Derrick Seabrook
- Jack Taal
- Brandon Thielen
- Marjorie Thompson



Telling Our Story

"Speak from the heart." That is the message our Executive Director Sandra Mak gives to our trainers and presenters. We supported Leadership Today graduates to tell our story and their own at 12 presentations this year. They spoke to others with disabilities, staff, college students, professors, families, board members and government leaders. As a result, we have had more interest in our courses and self-advocates have had more opportunities to practise leading together.

We are inspired by the stories of what our graduates have accomplished and proud of the small role we have played. Through these presentations, they inspire others with disabilities to believe that they, too, can be leaders together. And our graduates inspire others to see that people with developmental disabilities can be leaders when they have the right support and encouragement.

Presentations This Year

May 2006

International Summit on Social Inclusion (Montreal)

September 2006

Selections (Edmonton)

October 2006

Independent Counselling

Enterprises (Edmonton)

Excel Society (Edmonton)

MacEwan College (Edmonton)

November 2006

Marigold Enterprises Rehabilitation

Services Society (High Prairie)

On-Site Placement Services

(Edmonton)

December 2006

Leduc Community Living

Association

January 2007

Excel Society (Edmonton)

Edmonton Service Provider Council

Catholic Social Services

(Edmonton)

February 2007

Employabilities (Edmonton)



Left to right: Paulette McGinnis, Kathleen Biersdorff and Gail Davis.

We Thank Our Graduate Presenters This Year

- *Sheldon Cope*
- *John Goede*
- *Christine Houle*
- *Janine Kroy*
- *Paulette McGinnis*
- *Derrick Seabrook*
- *Melissa Simaey*
- *Marjorie Thompson*

Members Speak About Being Leaders Together

We have one of our graduate trainers **Janine Kroy** to thank for this year's theme. When asked about a theme for our Annual General Meeting, Janine said, "We come together as leaders." This is so true. Each year, we come together at our annual meeting as leaders of local self-advocacy groups, community organizations and government. In the next few pages, some of our members talk about being leaders together.



Randy Jacobson is a board member of St. Paul Abilities Network (SPAN) and is active with his Community Council in St. Paul and Positive People First. Along with Executive Director Tim Bear, the board members are leaders together for SPAN. They make decisions about by-law changes and what the agency should do in the future. Randy finds it very interesting. "I do more listening at the board and ask questions," says Randy. "Tim is a very understanding man and very down-to-earth. I can ask him about things and he makes it simple enough for me to understand."

Recently Randy was at an affordable housing meeting in Edmonton with Irene Shelp, a Northeast PDD staff who supports self-advocacy in the region. "We're having Irene come into the Community Council and our Positive People First meeting to share what we learned there," says Randy. "Irene's been a great help for me." Randy notes that he has a lot of people in his community who are willing to help him and other self-advocates be leaders. Being leaders together gives self-advocates like Randy a chance to show what they can do. In 2005, Randy Jacobson won the Norm McLeod Community Inclusion Leadership Award for self-advocates.

Several PDD regions have appointed self-advocates as interns to their boards.

David Saltvold is the current Intern for the PDD Central Alberta Community Board. He goes to PDD board meetings and gives a report each month that includes what he has learned at the self-advocacy group meetings and conferences that he attends. Thanks to David's reports, the board is aware of the issues and activities of self-advocates in the area. David is a leader together with his board, but particularly with his fellow board member and mentor Doris Kibermanis. "Whenever I have a question, I talk to Doris," said David in his March report. "She has been very helpful."





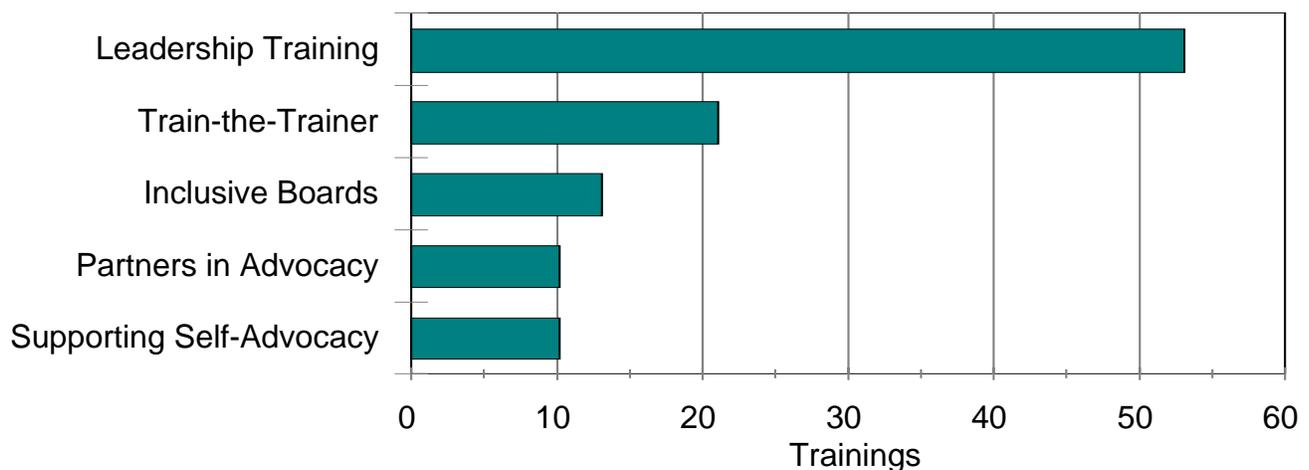
Lana Rutledge thinks working together with self-advocates can make a big difference. She and other leaders with the South Region Self-Advocacy Network (SRSAN) have met with the new CEO for South PDD to start talking about how PDD can help everyone who needs it. “I think if all the self-advocates come together, they can think of ways that support people, like PDD, can help more people than now,” says Lana. “Self-advocates and PDD can work together to find solutions.”

Lana thinks that self-advocates can also help the community understand people with disabilities as fellow citizens. “With all of us being able to come together as leaders, we can find out what we all think should happen and speak out to make people know it is not an institutionalized time any more,” says Lana. “It is time for people to be able to live where they want, with family or friends and in the community.” In 2005, Lana won the first Clarence Marsh Award from SRSAN.

L. J. MacDonald also believes that when self-advocates work together as leaders, they can make the community a better place. L. J. is a member of several self-advocacy groups that make their communities more inclusive. One of them, Central Alberta Self-Advocates (CASA), partnered with Safe Communities and the City of Red Deer for a Pedestrian Injury Prevention Campaign that made a 30 second ad, bus ads and posters. They raise awareness of people with disabilities as citizens with events during Community Living Awareness Month and have teams that translate papers into plain words. L. J. thinks that self-advocacy group supporters are an important part of being



Number of Training Sessions
1998 - 2007



able to be leaders together. "If Central Alberta did not have the support from their support person today, we would not have the groups we have today," says L. J. "People with disabilities would have no say in their lives and the communities would not know so much about people with disabilities as they do know." In 2006, L. J. won the Doreen Befus Award for the Self-Advocate of the Year from the PDD Central Alberta Community Board.



The Leadership Today Board is also a place where people are leaders together. **Doug Edey** was one of the first self-advocates to be on our board in 2001 and was elected again in 2006 for another 2-year term. He notes that this year was hard because there were only four members on the board. "But we try to work like leaders together," says Doug. "I hope once we get new members, we can become leaders together with different board members in different areas. Working together as leaders, the board will help each other and put the word out in our community about Leadership Today." Doug won the Norm McLeod Community Inclusion Leadership Award in 2003.

Alissha Schnell was elected to be on the board of Leadership Today in 2006 and took the position of Secretary. "I was excited about what will happen in the meetings of the Leadership Today Board," says Alissha. "It has been a new experience for me."



This was the last year on our board for **John Goede**. He has been Treasurer since January 2006. John says he has enjoyed being on the board, even though the board is small and needs more help. "I learned a lot being on the Leadership Today Board," says John. "We are leaders together."



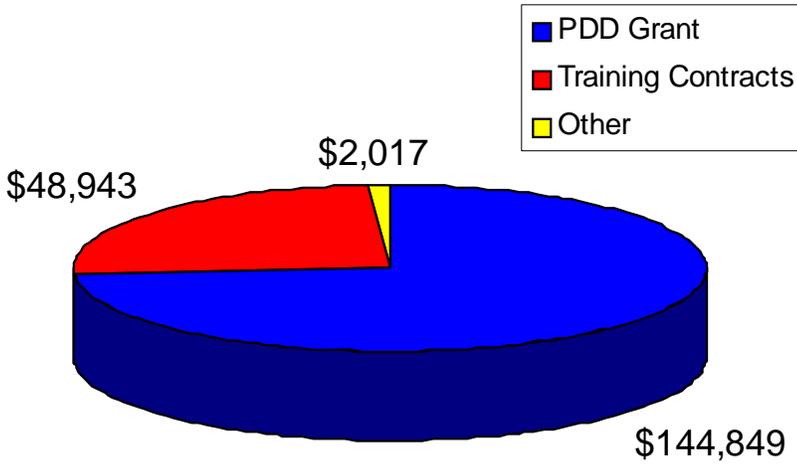
**Some very special supporters
of Leadership Today...**



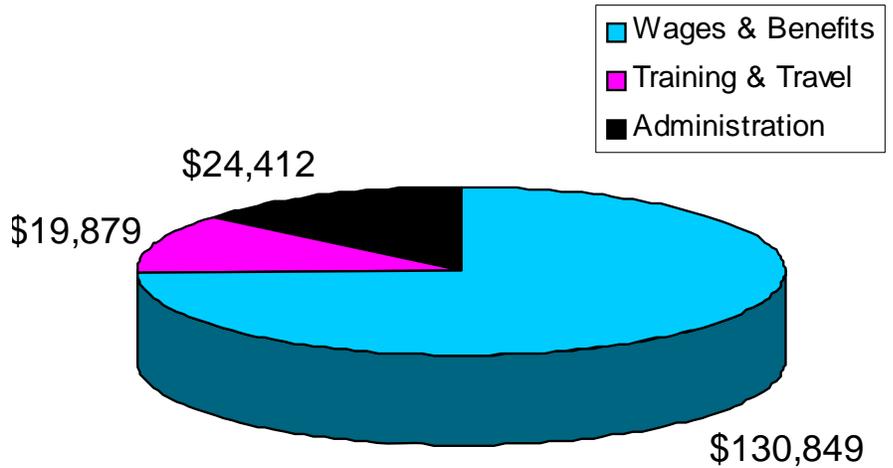
Left to Right: Noel McGarry, Gail Davis, Paulette McGinnis and Garry Donald

Leadership Today Society of Alberta Money Report - Year ending March 31, 2007

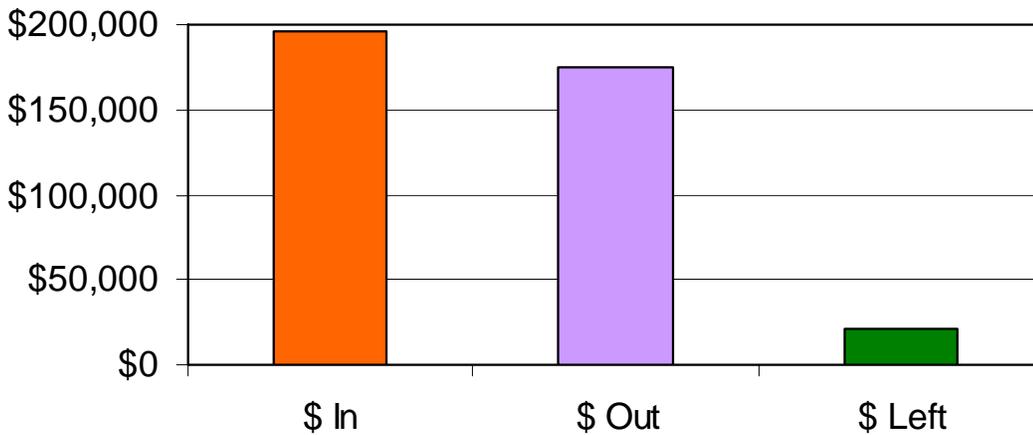
Money In (Revenue)



Money Out (Expenses)



How Much Money



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