



# *The Journey So Far*

**Annual Report  
2005 - 2006**

## **Leadership Today Society of Alberta Board of Directors 2005 - 2006**



*Paulette McGinnis  
President*



*Rhonda Moffat  
Treasurer  
(on leave January - March 2006)*



*Sandra Underschultz  
Secretary*



*Tedda Kaminski  
Director*



*John Goede  
Treasurer  
(January - March 2006)*

### **Mission**

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



### **The Journey So Far**

The image of a road in our logo stands for the journey that people must take to become a leader, as well as the journey through life. The road is winding, which shows that it is not always easy to become a leader. We chose "The Journey So Far" as our theme to remind us of how far we have all come in a short time, and of our goals as a Society and as individuals.

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## Report from the President

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I have sat on the Leadership Today board for the past four years and I have had four positions. I started my board journey as a Director. I have also been Secretary, Vice-President, and now President for the last two years. I have enjoyed being in all four positions. It showed me that I am continuing to take on challenges. For me, the most challenging one has been the President's role—setting the agenda, dealing with issues that arise, and making sure I understand what I need to sign, such as legal documents. As a self-advocate, it is hard to know the legal stuff, especially when it is not in plain language.

The good thing about being on the Leadership Today board is the continuous learning about the job. Now I am getting comfortable running the meetings and am starting to understand some of the Leadership Today's legal documents.

Leadership Today deals with a lot of things on a day-to-day basis, especially with funding to get more new courses going, running the office and getting the right staff. This year, the Leadership Today board has continued working on risk management, board recruitment and the board's roles and responsibilities.

The Board Development Committee is trying to get board members who know about the law, money, insurance, staff, policy and government. The thing that Leadership Today is struggling with the most right now is getting board members who know more of the legal stuff. Also, the people on the Leadership Today board are from different regions and it is difficult for us to get together, especially if something urgent comes up.

Two board members are done with their terms. Sandra Unterschultz has helped Leadership Today in many ways. Rhonda Moffat has also left and is now a staff for Leadership Today. Rhonda was our Treasurer. She would give the money report at our meetings.



**The Board's  
Journey**

**1998**  
**No self-advocates  
on the board**

My time as President is also over, though I will continue on for another year as Past President.

I am happy to see that Leadership Today now has courses for the staff that help graduates use their skills. Partners in Advocacy is our new course for staff, facilitated by graduates who have completed both courses of Leadership Today. I feel that once the service providers and support workers understand more about self-advocacy, they can start supporting people with disabilities to make decisions on a day-to-day basis and start respecting the choices that people with disabilities make.

**2001**  
**Four  
graduates  
elected  
to the  
board**

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

I feel that Leadership Today will keep on growing, and my dream is for the graduates of Leadership Today to continue their journey to become leaders and grow. I would like to see Leadership Today grow and have branch offices in different regions, so that more graduates could teach Leadership Today training in their region and continue promoting the courses.

**2004**  
**Graduate  
selected as  
President  
of the  
board**

I will continue to support Leadership Today because I feel that we all have a talent no matter what our disability is. I would like to tell our graduates and people with disabilities everywhere to follow their dreams and do not let anyone tell you what you cannot do. Take risks and challenge yourself— it is amazing what will happen!

*Paulette McGinnis*

## **The Board's Journey**

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## Report from the Executive Director

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Another year of my journey with Leadership Today has come and gone. This year has been filled with many new and exciting opportunities at Leadership Today.

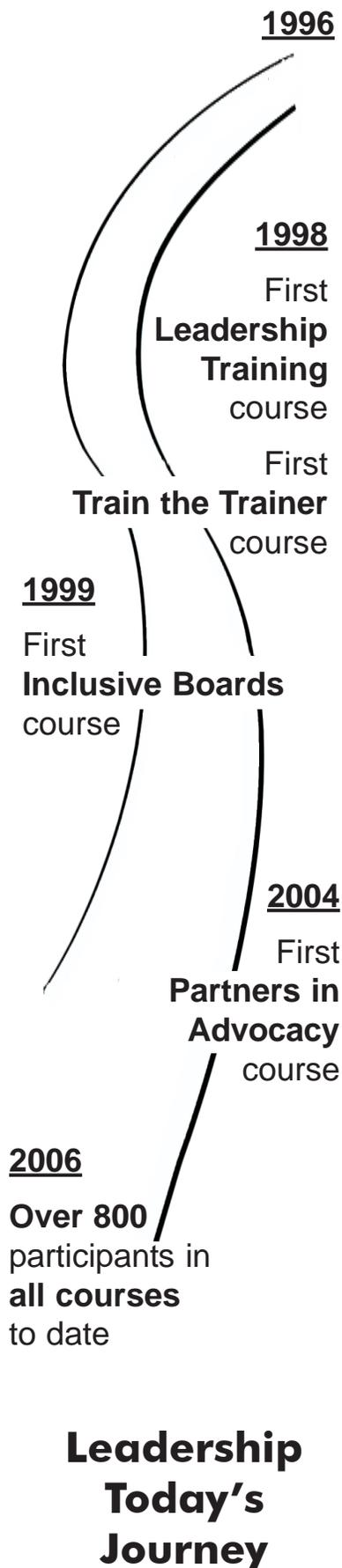
Our journey started in 1996 as a project, and in 1998 we held our first *Leadership Training* with 21 students. Eight years later, I finally feel we are making some differences for people with developmental disabilities. There are now 114 more people who have taken our *Leadership Training* this year.

Self-advocates now speak up all over Alberta—and people are starting to listen. But there are many bumps in the road. Many people in our communities, in government and in agencies do not understand just how much people with developmental disabilities can do, if they have the chance. I feel honoured to have a job where I meet so many people in communities across Alberta who do support self-advocates to be leaders in their own lives and in the community. Together we can change how others see people with disabilities, by giving people the tools and opportunities to have their voices be heard.

When we started our journey, we had just one course. Now we have four courses and a fifth one almost ready. Some of you have taken *Train-the-Trainer*. Graduates of that course help teach our other courses. Our *Supporting Leaders* course now has a new name, *Inclusive Boards*. This course is mainly for board members who want to include people with disabilities. This year, we made the final changes to our *Partners in Advocacy* course for support workers. It teaches staff how to support choices of people who have severe disabilities. One of our graduates gave this course in Lethbridge, and it was a big hit!

The next step in our journey is our *Supporting Self-Advocacy* course. It is for staff and families who

  
**Leadership  
Today's  
Journey**



want to support our graduates and others to practise their self-advocacy skills. We talked with lots of staff this year about what should be in our new course. People have been waiting for this course for a long time. Like many journeys, ours has had some detours.

Each year we have said goodbye to staff and board members, and invited new staff and board members to join us on the journey. Each new person brings fresh ideas and new skills. But it also takes time for them to learn their way around Leadership Today. Sometimes they get a little lost and we do not move forward as fast as we would like. I would like to thank Kathleen Biersdorff and Rhonda Moffat who joined Leadership Today as temporary staff for the last three months of this year. It was good to have staff who understood what we do and why it is important. They helped me get through a tough time with turnover. I also want to thank my board for their encouragement and support.

Through all of our journey, we have had the constant support of PDD at both the Provincial and Regional board level. They have been wonderful partners and have encouraged me to see the great things that can happen when everyone's voice is heard. When I started on this journey, I could not have imagined how a small organization like Leadership Today would do such "big" work in helping people fulfill dreams, have confidence, and perhaps change the way agencies provide services.

As I look toward the journey still ahead, I picture a world where everyone matters and counts. I see self-advocacy as no longer a new fad, but a way of doing things no matter what you do. I picture an Alberta where we no longer have to struggle to continue as an organization, because self-advocacy and the work of Leadership Today are valued and necessary.

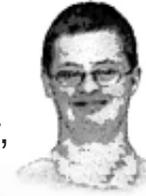
I am proud of what we have accomplished on the journey so far, and I am excited about the journey ahead. As always, our graduates are my inspiration.

*Sandra Mak*

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## **Brandon's Journey - South Region**

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Brandon Thielen took *Leadership Training* in July, 2005. He says that the video made the biggest difference for him in becoming a better self-advocate. "It made me think more about myself and that I can be a good self-advocate," says Brandon. He has also learned to speak up more. "Before, I was a bit nervous about speaking up, but now I am better," says Brandon. "I am more outgoing now." Brandon gave a speech to a group at the Lethbridge Community College this year.

Brandon also graduated from the college this spring and has big plans for the future. "After I write up my business plan, I am starting a business scanning pictures and scrapbooking." He will also keep helping others stick up for people with disabilities.

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## **Christina's Journey - Calgary Region**

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Christina Stebanuk is a parent and a self-advocate with the Disability Action Hall. To Christina, self-advocacy is about standing up for her rights and educating society. "I practise speaking up on a daily basis for my son and myself about getting services," says Christina. "I let people know that we have rights in society." She says *Leadership Today* taught her how to become a leader, and the Hall has helped her become a stronger advocate.

Christina has spoken up about service, transportation and housing needs at conferences and public meetings. She has taken part in rallies in Calgary and at the legislature in Edmonton. Christina has helped plan the 2006 Summit. "I let them know what self-advocates would like to see at the summit." Christina facilitated *Leadership Training* a few years ago. Since then, she has also worked on projects where she taught self-advocates and staff from across Alberta.

  
**Our  
Graduates'  
Journeys**

**2002**

**Craig Decoux** wins Norm McLeod Award

**2003**

**Doug Edey** wins Norm McLeod Award

**2004**

**Roy Skoreyko** wins Norm McLeod Award

**2005**

**Randy Jacobson** wins Norm McLeod Award

**Lana Rutledge** wins Clarence Marsh Memorial Award

**Ray Remington** wins Alberta Centennial Medal

**2006**

**Paulette McGinnis** wins Celebrating Northern Women Award

**Our Graduates' Journeys**

**Mike's Journey - Central Region**



Michael Boyd of Wainwright is one of the first Leadership Today graduates. He has been an active self-advocate in the Central Region ever since. "I started our self-advocacy group in Wainwright, the Wainwright Cheetahs," says Mike. "I am the President." Mike is also on the CAAN (Central Alberta Advocacy Network) executive. Mike has made speeches and facilitated Leadership Today training over the years. Most recently, Mike made up a diabetes workshop, which he gave in Red Deer and Vermilion. He hopes to do more talks in the future.

Mike sees self-advocacy not just as standing up for yourself, but also as being trustworthy and a role model for others. "I am a well-known person in my community," says Mike. "A lot of young people look up to me as a friend." In 2006, Mike was nominated for the Norm McLeod Leadership Award for his work.

**Janine's Journey - Edmonton Region**



Janine Kroy found out about Leadership Today at a Gateway board meeting that she sat in on. Before she took Leadership Training last year, if a person did something that hurt her feelings or was unfair, she would just let it go. But at the training, she realized how important it was to stick up for herself. "Lots of people with disabilities do not stand up for themselves and get squashed like bugs," says Janine. So it is important to stick up for yourself and others."

Janine says that doing the leadership video taught her a lot about herself that she did not know before. What has helped Janine to become a better self-advocate is self-confidence, loving herself more and accepting herself as a person regardless of the disability. "And to go with your gut instinct," adds Janine. "When you know something is wrong, act on it right away."

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## **Michelle's Journey - Northwest Region**

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Michelle Reid took *Leadership Training and Train-the-Trainer* through the Transitional Vocational Program (TVP) at Fairview College in 2004. Since that time, Michelle has taken Toastmasters to become a better public speaker and teacher. "We had classes with Toastmasters every Tuesday and they showed us how to prepare our speech," reports Michelle. "Then we do a speech and they evaluate us on them. On the last day, they said how well I did."

Michelle gets plenty of practice teaching others to be better self-advocates as part of the Pro-Stars group in Grande Prairie. Before their Wednesday meetings, Michelle and Paulette McGinnis get together to plan out what they are going to do. Michelle says that she learns a lot by teaching others. "Last week we talked about relationship problems, and that people had to work out their own problems," says Michelle. "And that helped *me* learn as well."

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## **Maurice's Journey - Northeast Region**

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Maurice LaForce took *Leadership Training* in February, 2006. He learned how important it was to believe in himself and have a positive attitude in everything he does. "I am learning to stand up for myself and be more positive in my thoughts," says Maurice. The class also helped him plan and organize.

Maurice is just beginning his self-advocacy journey and has many plans. He also has a mentor in Jason Huish, another Leadership Today graduate and a member of the Westlock Independence Network (WIN) board. "I am kind of following in Jason's footsteps." Maurice plans to join Toastmasters and start attending Community Council meetings in Westlock. Maurice hopes to teach others about self-advocacy. "I want to let others know that I have been where they are now."

  
**Our  
Graduates'  
Journeys**

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# Leadership Today Training

## April 2005 - March 2006

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### Northwest Region

April 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
*Peace River*

January 2006  
**Leadership Training**  
*Grande Prairie*

### Edmonton Region

April 2005  
**Inclusive Boards**  
*Edmonton - Gateway*

August 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
*St. Albert - Transitions*

October 2005  
**Train-the-Trainer**  
*Edmonton*

November 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
*Edmonton*

February 2006  
**Inclusive Boards**  
*St. Albert - Transitions*

March 2006  
**Leadership Training**  
*Edmonton - SKILLS*

### Northeast Region

February 2006  
**Leadership Training**  
*St. Paul*

### Central Region

June 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
 and  
**Partners in Advocacy**  
**(3 pilot sessions)**  
*Red Deer*

### South Region

May 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
*Medicine Hat*

July 2005  
**Leadership Training**  
*Lethbridge*

September 2005  
**Train-the-Trainer**  
*Lethbridge*

March 2006  
**Inclusive Boards**  
 and  
**Partners in Advocacy**  
*Lethbridge*



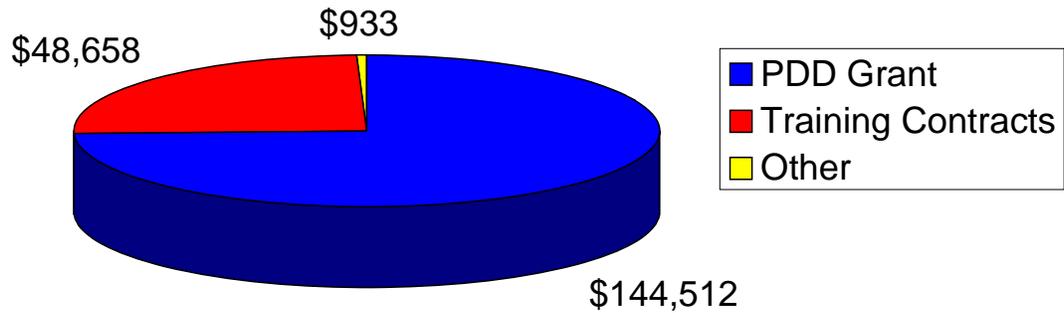
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# Leadership Today Society of Alberta

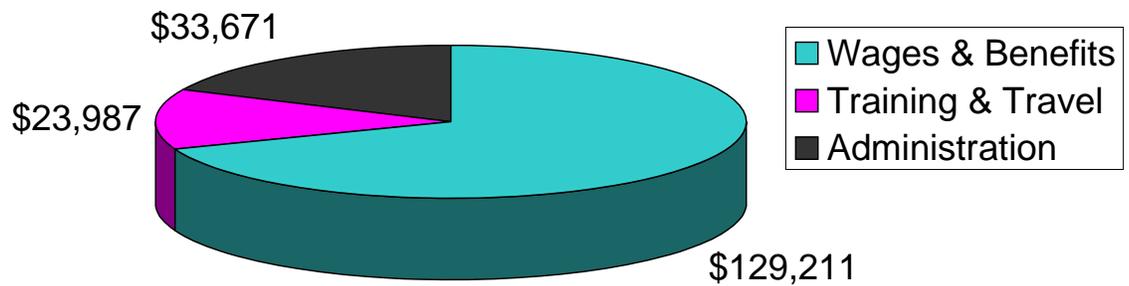
## Money Report - year ending March 31, 2006

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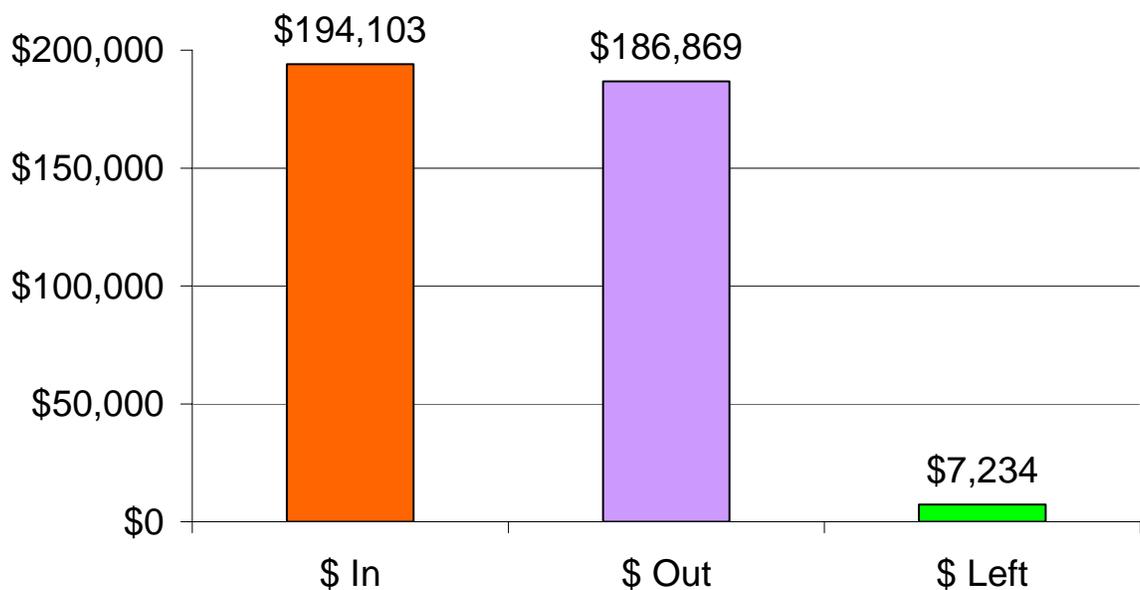
### Money In (Revenue)



### Money Out (Expenses)



### How Much Money



## **Leadership Today Society of Alberta**

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