

**Draft Summary Notes**  
***posAbilities* Parent Support Network Meeting**

January 27, 2010

10 a.m. to noon

*posAbilities*, Suite 240 - 4664 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby, BC

---

The proposed agenda was adopted.

**Part 1. Presentation on Supported Employment** (segment was tape recorded.)  
Guest Speakers Mary McGivern, Business Developer; Kalena Kavanaugh, Manager and Seema Tripathi, Employment Specialist with *posAbilities* Employment Service.

***posAbilities* Social Enterprise Development**

Mary McGivern, Business Developer with *posAbilities*, presented the status of her work in supporting the transition of several day programs (Ladybug Art Gardens, Eco-Rangers and Aegis Work Crew) into a new Social Enterprise with two distinct divisions: gardening and home maintenance services. Please see attached executive summary of the Business Plan for details. The launch date is set for April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. The business name is yet to be determined – stay tuned!

Key points that arose for discussion following Mary's presentation included:

- There will be flexibility in how many hours per week a person wishes to work.
- Persons served will be at the worksite with support workers.
- Employees will be able to continue to participate in their day program when not working (we are beginning this with people whom we already serve.)
- Intake interviews will begin in March for the positions available.
- The starting wage is \$6/hr (for those individuals with no previous work experience,) which will increase to \$8/hr after 400 hours of work. The employees will receive 4% vacation pay, WCB coverage, and will have standard deductions such as taxes, Employment Insurance and Canadian Pension Plan.
- Uniforms will be issued to employees (t-shirts/caps).
- Employees will be encouraged to advance their skills and move on to competitive opportunities if they wish to.
- A Business Coordinator will be hired to run this enterprise (Mary's role is as Business Developer, a part time contract she holds with *posAbilities*.)
- Our target market initially will be programs, our families, and people we know. We may need a year to work out the kinks of this business, and beginning those who may forgive us if our service isn't quite perfect is a good strategy before pursuing our share of the competitive market. We cannot afford to have negative

comments about our service, as so many people purchase based on ‘word of mouth’ or referrals.

- The enterprise will be based out of our Venables site; with a second dispatch site in New Westminster. We will be working in: Vancouver, Burnaby, Maple Ridge and the North Shore. We are not targeting Richmond, as another society has a Handy Crew there. We may make referrals to each other.
- Stage Door could also become a social enterprise. Currently, Gord Tulloch, Program Director, Mary and other *posAbilities* staff are looking at the feasibility of this concept and exploring market opportunities. Further work on this project is planned for the fall.
- Families identified that some of their children’s strengths are in other areas (rather than labour), examples include mathematics/office work.
- Mary can be reached using this email: [MMcGivern@posAbilities.ca](mailto:MMcGivern@posAbilities.ca) or by calling head office and leaving a message, 604-922-6619.

### **Introduction to *posAbilities* Employment Service**

Kalena Kavanaugh, Manager of *posAbilities* Employment Service and Seema Tripathi, Employment Specialist then introduced families to the new Employment Service.

*posAbilities* Employment Service assists individuals who have developmental disabilities to find and maintain paid employment in the community. Employment Specialists will work through a discovery process with the individual, and assist them in matching their skills and interests with suitable paid employment. This includes identifying which employers would be supportive, and assisting with the preparation and steps of getting a job. Once on the job site, there will be training and support, assistance in developing natural supports (peers) in the workplace, and a fading out of the employment specialist. We want to hear, ‘you don’t need to come with me anymore’ from the person served! If challenges arise, our employment service is just a call away. Either the individual or employer can contact us to ensure that issues are addressed and employment maintained. We also assist people with advancing their skills and seeking new employment, or exiting employment if that is their wish.

We may refer individuals to other programs such as life skills if they are not ready to pursue competitive employment when they apply. For others, the support of a Life Skills Worker may be sufficient to assist them with achieving their volunteer or employment goals.

After a brief introduction, Kalena walked everyone through the service’s draft Information Handbook (see attached). The presentation included information about what the service is designed to do, where it is located, when it operates and how the intake process works. She also presented information about how support is provided to the individual when embarking on a career, on the job site, and on an ‘as needed basis’ should there be a requirement by the employer or person served for some additional support to maintain employment.

The support of families/caregivers can also be critical to achieving and maintaining employment. For example, for some individuals, something little such as ensuring that the person adjusts to a new schedule and makes it to the bus stop on time so that he/she won't be late for their shift is essential.

The group also discussed some of the internal structural changes, such as the MOVE employment program, which is transitioning individuals at this time to either the intake process for into the employment services, while others may go to working with their life skills worker or other day program. There is no loss of service due to these changes for persons served.

As with our social enterprise, we are launching this service to support the persons who are already connected to our organization and who have funding from Community Living BC. There is no additional charge to the individual (or families) who participate.

The service will begin in the tri-cities area and move to Vancouver. If your funding comes from another region of CLBC, it would be a good idea for your son/daughter to discuss interest in the program with their Facilitator at CLBC. When a program begins to show success, it can take flight quickly.

It was also noted that once individuals are on their path to competitive employment, the ideal situation would be for them to spend not work hours in community setting with friends/peers/co-workers, rather than returning to a day program.

## **Part 2. Old Business:**

1. The December 17 minutes were adopted with no changes, and the September 23, 2010 meeting notes were amended, then adopted. Both will be posted to our website, under the Families Matter section (tab – “your posAbilities”)
2. Feedback on Securing our Future Educational Series

Monique shared her plan to repeat the series “as is” in the Fall of 2011; with an adapted version of the program offered in April/May (dates TBC) and geared towards the interests and needs of working families. The adaptations that are being considered include: participating in a one or more modules, rather than committing to the whole series; offering the program on Saturdays, and some support for childminding/ESL.

While the Spring Series will not provide as many opportunities for developing a close-knit group, or developing all of the tools needed to secure a personal and financial plan, it will allow us to reach families who for time purposes, distance from Burnaby, or different stages of planning, would not be able to attend a series of six sessions.

The ‘scholarship series’ approach is a more intensive, and includes some valuable ‘add ons’ from PLAN, as the goal is to ensure that participants walk away with all of the information that they will need to create personal and financial plans/products for their loved ones. For example, PLAN is offering “graduates” of the scholarship series:

- An invitation to participate in PLAN’s Wills, Estates and Trusts seminar for FREE (location: PLAN’s Burnaby office) as often as needed to fully understand the content and to be prepared to walk into your lawyer’s office to create a Will. \*Many families need to repeat the course several times to grasp all of the material
- An invitation to participate in PLAN’s Supported Decision Making workshop, where individuals/ families complete the forms required for a Representation Agreement.
- Any extra support needed to open up a Registered Disability Savings Plan.
- A contact list for whom to call/where to go for more information on any of the topics covered in the course, including housing options.

The collaboration with the Burnaby Association and PLAN worked out very well. Monique thanked parents for participating in the program and in its evaluation, so that we can offer quality educational opportunities. The parents who participated all found it to be a valuable course.

### **Part 3. New Business:**

#### **Brainstorming a list of presenters for upcoming meetings**

The group would like to proceed with the same time/format of meetings in 2011. It has been one year since the group first formed! A list of topics/guest speakers was presented, and Monique will propose a schedule, guest speakers and details based on this input:

#### Topics of interest:

1. Investing your RDSP – wealth management for your relative
2. Tax Time – Learn about disability related tax credits and savings strategies
3. Home Ownership Models Exploration (HOME - for persons with disabilities)
4. Passing the Torch - Preparing siblings for new roles as caregivers age
5. An overview of grants to support adults with disabilities
6. How to safely engage in Social Networking with our sons/daughters with disabilities
7. How to develop a personal support network

#### **Announcements and Closing Comments:**

Monique referred the group to the email sent on January 26, which contains information about upcoming news, events and services offered by *posAbilities*, other agencies, BC

Association for Community Living and Community Living BC. A copy of the email and pertinent documents are attached.

The meeting adjourned at noon. The next meeting date will be on February 24, 2011 in the Large Boardroom of *posAbilities* Head Office in Burnaby.