

Community Living Georgina

Strategic Plan

2010 to 2015

September 2010

Introduction

This is the final version of Community Living Georgina's latest strategic plan and covers the present to 2015. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for action for the next five years, clarifying the future CLG is working towards (its vision), the role CLG will play in achieving that future (its mission), the values chosen to guide its day to day activities, and the five areas identified as priorities.

The initial version was drafted by the management team with the help of CMCS Consulting Services and served as the basis for obtaining input from all of CLG's stakeholders – i.e. the balance of CLG's employees, members of the board of directors, people receiving support from the organization and family members. Comment was sought and received through representative focus groups, one for each stakeholder group. Attendance at the focus groups, facilitated by CMCS, totaled forty-two: nine family members, seven individuals supported by CLG, twenty-one staff and five people from the board of directors.

All Community Living Georgina employees, board members, and member families were provided with a survey and a stamped envelope pre-addressed to CMCS. The hard copy surveys were intended to encourage participation of everyone involved with CLG, especially those not participating in the focus groups. They also provided a forum for further comment from those who had attended a focus group session. Of the two hundred and forty-four surveys mailed by CLG (one hundred and thirty-five to staff, sixty-six to families, thirty-three to association members and ten to the board of directors) fifty-six were returned, a twenty-three percent response rate. This means that in total CLG benefited from almost one hundred stakeholder responses to the proposed plan.

CMCS consolidated all the stakeholder input and combined it with the initial draft to show comments, suggestions and proposed alternatives for each aspect of the plan. Some of the proposed alternatives came from the stakeholders, and others from CMCS. This information was provided to the management team when it met to reconsider each component of the first draft, this time taking into account what the stakeholders had to say. As a result, ten out of the fifteen items set out in the first draft (i.e. vision, mission, eight values and five strategic directions) were changed, acknowledging and confirming the value of the input that the stakeholders provided.

Because it reflects the input and ideas of all those with an interest in the future of the organization, the strategic plan that follows can truly be considered Community Living Georgina's plan.

Positioning Statements

The vision statement describes the world beyond CLG that CLG is trying to create. The mission statement explains what CLG will do to make the vision a reality. The values describe what is important to CLG and what needs to be reflected in CLG's day-to-day operation.

Vision

Community Living Georgina envisions a future in which people with developmental disabilities are accepted, respected, included, and recognized as valued community members.

Mission

Community Living Georgina's mission is to offer high-quality, personalized supports to people with developmental disabilities that are built on advocacy, education, partnerships, choice, and pursuit of personal life vision.

Values

Community Living Georgina values:

- The unique contributions of every individual in our organization
- A safe environment for all people
- The importance of families and friends in the lives of the people we support
- Cultivating and maintaining positive community relationships
- Partnering with other community organizations and resources
- The role of staff and volunteers in:
 - The accomplishments of the individuals they support, and
 - The achievement of organizational goals
- Promoting innovation and creativity
- The accountability of all to achieve our vision

Strategic Directions

1. Further entrench individuals' personal life plans as the foundation of Community Living Georgina's service delivery model.
2. Advance the quality and responsiveness of day services, address facility and resource utilization, and increase program capacity.
3. Increase residential capacity to support people with complex needs (both existing and new clients), improve intake and develop policies related to service limitations.
4. Enhance the work environment using strategies that foster a high level of employee commitment, competency and knowledge.
5. Increase public awareness of Community Living Georgina in order to partner with families in innovative ways, and engage more young families.

1. Service Quality

Further entrench individuals' personal life plans as the foundation of Community Living Georgina's service delivery model.

To ensure and enhance service quality, Community Living Georgina will undertake three strategic initiatives:

CLG will review its utilization of the Dreams Process as a vehicle to facilitate the development, and realization, of people's personal life visions. CLG remains focused on the principle that ongoing planning and support for each individual are being driven by that person's goals and preferences. In order for this to occur in a meaningful way, the people supported by Community Living Georgina need to have the information, tools and support necessary to develop a personal life vision that can be 'brought to life' through the achievement of meaningful goals and—just as importantly—the method(s) used to help elicit those visions must also effectively identify the supports CLG can offer in pursuit of those goals and dreams. Currently, Community Living Georgina utilizes a tool called the "DREAMS Process". Within the context of the concerns raised during this strategic planning initiative, CLG will consider whether DREAMS is the best way to ensure that people are aware of, and understand, the options available to them, and have a voice in directing those supports. CLG will also review the process to assess its suitability as a planning tool for those people who are unable to communicate their wishes, or only receive day supports from CLG.

While remaining committed to the empowerment of the people supported to drive the planning of those supports, and actively participate in it to the extent possible, CLG will work with staff on identifying shortcomings in the current approach, and ways to address them. If necessary, CLG will review other tools for their utility. These tools would either replace or enhance the DREAMS Process. In conjunction with this review, Community Living Georgina will clarify the future of the personal outcomes approach to service delivery as provided in the past by the recently bankrupt Council on Quality and Leadership Canada, and now by the founding organization in the U.S. Depending on the result, it may then explore other quality standards such as FOCUS, decide how to proceed, and begin to move in the appropriate direction.

Concurrently, CLG will seek ways to increase the level of understanding among staff regarding the value that Community Living Georgina places on personal outcomes for the people it supports. It will identify training needs and add to existing training as needed, and it will ensure the tool, whatever it is, is utilized effectively.

Community Living Georgina will introduce a comprehensive approach to protecting and promoting the rights of people supported, including accountability checks and balances. It will do so by creating a Clients' Rights Committee, or similar mechanism, to review and advise on circumstances where restrictions on individuals' rights are being proposed.

2. Day Services

Advance the quality and responsiveness of day services, address facility and resource utilization, and increase program capacity

With the goal of improving day services and adding to its capacity, Community Living Georgina will undertake a number of actions:

Research best practices related to day services

Evaluate current day services options and develop plans for improvement

- Assess its effectiveness as a model for achieving the goals of the service
- Identify barriers preventing clients from maximizing their participation
 - o Proposed solutions will take into account the transportation needs of the participants, as well as current practices related to vehicle utilization that may create transportation barriers, including for those clients not currently attending the day program
- Conduct environmental reviews to determine if there are changes in day program locations that could be made so the facilities are better suited to the activities provided, and to the number of people participating
- Explore the feasibility of operating some day programs from the homes of individuals supported, as a means of addressing the needs of those currently receiving both residential and day supports and whose physical, medical, behavioural and other challenges present barriers to fitting into, and gaining maximum benefit from, the existing day services
- Identify ways to maximize the use of existing staff resources
- Improve accessibility
- Increase community participation, and strategize on ways to maximize every opportunity to build awareness and connections in the community

Seek out ways to make the construction of a combined administration/day services facility on land owned by association in Keswick financially feasible.

Related to employment, introduce new approaches to supporting people in pursuing their employment goals.

Seek out innovative ways of supporting people not currently assisted by Community Living Georgina due to lack of funding, including:

- Students finishing school
- People new to the area
- Adults wishing to access day supports who have behavioural and other challenges not seen before, who do not bring additional funds or resources with them, and whose needs do not fit with Community Living Georgina's day services resources

3. Residential Services

Increase residential capacity to support people with complex needs (both existing and new clients), improve intake and develop policies related to service limitations

Research and develop ways to address support needs of:

- People seeking residential services who have complex medical needs, and may have some government funding (e.g. capital dollars), but not enough to cover the realistic costs of providing ongoing, adequate support (i.e.: staffing, accommodations)
- People currently receiving residential services whose needs have become, or are expected to become, more complex due to aging, illness or medical fragility

Related to serving more individuals in any of the organization's programs, enhance CLG's intake process:

- Ensure that the organization is using state-of-the-art intake processes and forms to obtain as clear a picture as possible of each individual's current and projected support needs
 - o Avoid putting the organization at risk by ensuring it collects essential information about the individuals and their needs, so Community Living Georgina can make an appropriate determination about its capacity to provide the right kind of supports.
 - o Develop a formal policy of accepting new clients only when the appropriate resources exist, or will be made available on an ongoing basis
- Research other resources, and develop a clear policy on the limits of the assistance the association is able to provide to those currently receiving support, identifying trigger points for involving other resources or for beginning transitioning to a situation where the association partners with other facilities, or is no longer the primary service provider

Related to transportation, which is critical to the process of community involvement, find ways to ensure the needs of both existing and new participants are met by developing plans that address the following issues:

- Overall capacity, including for people involved only in day services
- Aging vehicles
- Operating costs
- Day-to-day logistical challenges

Develop a plan to continue the current high level of maintenance of residential facilities

- Take account of the increasing volume of work as facilities have grown, and the eventual retirement of the property supervisor
- Include a strategy for ensuring all staff recognize their responsibility for looking after the association's assets, especially in the residential environments

4. Staffing

Enhance the work environment using strategies that foster a high level of employee commitment, competency and knowledge.

Community Living Georgina will seek to engage its employees in a “partnership of excellence”, endeavouring to support staff to the greatest possible extent, while expecting staff to be fully committed to the philosophy and goals of the organization; putting forth their best effort. CLG will demonstrate its commitment to staff by researching and implementing ways to enhance the organization’s work environment:

To achieve this end, CLG will research best practices related to increasing staff engagement, morale and recognition:

- Pursue the goal of becoming an employer of choice
- Provide training to management
 - Could include skill building and strategies to foster teamwork and build camaraderie, clear and timely communication, facilitating input/participation of staff in decision-making, acknowledging quality job performance and conveying appreciation on a day-to-day basis.
- Identify ways to improve staff training
 - May be tied to future “core competencies” descriptions being developed by provincial HR initiative
- Ensure that staff are well-informed and well-trained in the implications of the Ministry of Community and Social Services “Transformation Policy” as more information becomes available
- Explore & develop strategies to improve skills and confidence in connection-building and being “ambassadors of change” in the community for the people they support
- Flesh out a strategic approach to employee development and succession
- Develop strategies to improve staff awareness, connections, and communication across the services provided by the organization

The intent of these steps is to foster a staff group that:

- Embraces the association’s vision and approach to services,
- Is skilled and supportive of each other,
- Is informed, engaged and enthusiastic and
- Possesses a high degree of job satisfaction.

5. Families

Increase public awareness of Community Living Georgina in order to partner with families in innovative ways, and engage more young families

Community Living Georgina will research and implement ways to enhance the relationship of CLG with families, including those who are younger and not yet fully engaged with CLG and its services.

Through this process CLG will seek ways to creatively meet the needs of new individuals in new ways, including by developing working partnerships between individual families and CLG, and between groups of families who have funds, helping them work together to find unique support solutions to the service needs of their sons and daughters. In so doing, CLG will be positioning itself as the 'service provider of choice' within the Georgina catchment area.

Specific to improving its engagement with younger families, CLG will:

- Develop strategies to ensure the long-term financial viability of the summer camp program
- Explore ways to provide needed services to those families now, building on the success of summer camp (e.g.- web-based resources, seminars on adult service system)
- Research what other agencies are doing
- Find ways to capitalize on the success of the summer camp. CLG could survey parents – e.g. re respite during March break, Christmas holidays
- Develop effective marketing strategies for this improved engagement, taking account of limitations that result from lack of funding.

Increasing awareness of CLG among the broader community and this target audience, in particular, will be a necessary and ongoing step in the process. Anticipated benefits include the opportunity to interact with these families, identify the kinds of services they will be looking for in the short and long term, and develop relationships with both families and clients who will use CLG's core services in the future. Just as important as initiating and maintaining these relationship, is the active, persistent, and consistent development and promotion of partnerships role-models, "champions of the cause" and other positive community connections. Not only are they of critical importance to achieving CLG's long-term vision, but a vital piece of the puzzle in being able to offer these new and innovative kinds of support.

Next Steps

Strategic plans have value only if they are implemented, and if that implementation is communicated to all the stakeholders.

Responsibility for making the plan a reality will fall to the Board of Directors and the management team.

The Board role for the most part will be to monitor the work of management.

The management team will fulfill its responsibility by developing a series of one year operating plans that incorporate the five strategic directions and that are true to the organization's new vision, mission and values.

The management team will monitor its work on the year plan on a monthly basis, and will prepare a written review at the end of each year that includes progress against the strategic plan.

It will be important that staff be given the opportunity to be involved in specific initiatives related to its implementation.

The Board may choose to pursue the idea of engaging a group of people from outside the organization to act as third party adjudicators of success. These people would review the results achieved at the end of the five year period, and comment on whether in their opinion CLG achieved what it had intended. Members could be drawn from the local community, and/or from other community living organizations in the province.

At its option, the Board could consider convening that group at the outset, and involving it in an annual review of progress against the strategic plan.

Communication with the stakeholders is critical to the value and effectiveness of the strategic planning process. For CLG, communication should start with the final version of the plan once it is approved by the Board, and continue with regular updates on what is happening. These could be quarterly, semi-annually or annually. Staff in particular should be aware of how work on the plan is progressing. The management team will assume primary responsibility for communication throughout the five year period.