

REPORT OF THE CEO

Completing my first year as CEO, I find myself appreciating our team more and more and amazed at the services we offer. I also feel privileged to lead this agency as we continue engaging with our community and partners to offer diverse services to children and adults.



Over the last year, the social media presence on Facebook and Twitter for our agency and social enterprises has grown exponentially. We publish updates on programs, fun activities for individuals and staff, job postings as well as media that is of interest to our sector. Our other social media streams with Oasis by the Bay and the ReUse Centre are getting as much activity to showcase what they have to offer. We strive to increase awareness in the work we do and hope we are shared by followers, thus broadening our reach.

Connecting with various partners has been an important activity over the past year. Joining the South Georgian Bay Subregion Alliance has refreshed connections with our health care partners, community services and the community at large. Several team members actively participate in gatherings, info sharing sessions and attend various events. We are also connecting through local conferences. We engaged in management training with other community partners. The exchange between our organizations formed new bonds, giving us the ability to discuss common issues and start working on solutions as a community.

Over the first few months of my tenure, stabilization was essential and growth activities were left to a minimum. With the announced retirement of our Director of Programs, Suzanne Rawn, the decision was made to select internally and take the opportunity to mentor over a period of about 6 months. The candidates applying for the position were challenged through a number of activities and the incoming Director of People and Programs, Scott Kelly, shadowed and learned from Suzanne's decades of experience.

In January, the Senior Management Team contracted a consultant to assist in a new strategic plan. Surveys and focus groups took place with staff, individuals and parents and the new plan, published in May 2018, was revealed to represent the voices of all. As an entire E3 team, we embrace the five strategic directions over the next three years:

1. reshape E3 into an employer of choice;
2. embrace innovative, inclusive and responsive service options;
3. passionately pursue our mission;

4. revitalize organizational leadership; and
5. recommit to mission-driven enterprises.

We have several teams connected with a number of projects that will carry us into 2021. We committed to changes related to human resources. We recognize that employees working in direct service delivery are the heart and soul of who we are. We are creating more full time positions, offering employees better benefits and offering individuals more stability in support. We also created team lead position to further support incoming staff in developing their role and skills and working for a better and more enjoyable workplace.

As with any large organization dispersed geographically, communication can be challenging. Although e-mail can assist, it does not replace face to face conversations. To that end, we hold town hall meetings and Fika (Swedish coffee break), to share news and developments within our organization and also in the sector. These are open to all employees and everyone is encouraged to bring questions. The senior management team maintains an open door policy. A member of senior management also attends staff meetings for a few updates every month. We do continue to try to improve communication and find innovative ways to get information out.

Over the year, we increased training activities to add to skills and assist employees to be able to approach situations with new knowledge. With our changing population, we must adapt to different social needs and emerging trends in the intellectual and developmental (dis)ability sector. Individuals are well aware of their rights and are very technology-savvy. They have a right to a full life and as an agency, we try to find new ways to deliver services and add to our offerings. To that effect, we added the RISE program that allows individuals from our community and abroad to attend workshops in a number of areas, such as art, cooking, fitness and more. We seek new types of living arrangements to better suit individual needs and desires.

We have lost several individuals over the year and we fondly remember them and their stories. They will be forever part of our history. We take the time to meet and reflect together to work through the loss and grief. Supporting each other is one of the greatest strengths of this organization.

As we engage fully in our strategic plan and team approach, there is no doubt that E3 will continue to evolve to meet emerging needs within a fiscally challenged

environment. With our dedicated team members numbering over 240, we will be able to embrace the challenges and joys of the years to come.

Christy Hage

