

# PlainTalk

## NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Newsletter for Plainfield Community Homes • Volume 1 • Issue 5 • Fall-Winter 2008

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**Photographers**  
Lisa Yiannoulis / Barb Gannon  
Eddie Richards / Lynn Tousseant

Printing and design by Market High Advertising Ltd., Trenton, Ontario

PlainTalk is a free newsletter published by Plainfield Community Homes, 91 Millennium Parkway, Belleville, Ontario K8N 4Z5. It is also available online at [www.plainfield.org](http://www.plainfield.org)

If you would like to be added to the PlainTalk mailing list, please send your name, address and phone number, including area code, to PlainTalk Newsletter  
91 Millennium Parkway  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 4Z5  
or by e-mail to [info@plainfield.org](mailto:info@plainfield.org)

## THE WAY I SEE IT

John Klassen - Executive Director

Much has been said and written about 'social capital' in the last several years. Al Condeluci, in his book *Cultural Shifting*, describes social capital as "...connections and relationships that develop around community and the value these relationships hold for the members."

Robert Putnam has written extensively about the topic and references much research on this topic. "Countless studies document the link between society and psyche: people who have close friends and confidantes, friendly neighbors and supportive co-workers are less likely to experience sadness, loneliness, low self-esteem and problems with eating and sleeping. The single most common finding from a half century's research on the correlates of life satisfaction, not only in the United States but around the world, is that happiness is best predicted by the breadth and depth of one's social connections." (Robert Putnam – *Bowling Alone*)

When I was asked to contribute an article on social capital I thought of the above quotes from Putnam and Condeluci. For me, the best way to think of 'social capital' is to give you a personal perspective from real life experience.

When I reflect on my son, Zach, I see that he has built up considerable social capital and with the assistance of great staff

continues to accumulate social capital as he is becoming more involved in every day and ordinary places in the community. One of his favorite activities when he comes home on weekends is to visit our neighbor and then go around the block and chat with other acquaintances in the community. I would guess that most of the people in our neighborhood know Zach by name and me as "Zach's Dad". In fact, I will be approached by some of these neighbors from time to time and they will mention that they saw Zach in various places in Belleville and they stopped to say hi.

The other day I picked up some milk at Rossmore Stop and the lady behind the counter said, "Where's Zach? We miss him around here!" As I left the store, I could not help but feel good about that short conversation with someone who knows Zach and feels genuinely interested in him.

Zach's mom and I have had very similar encounters in numerous different places including the hair salon, the pharmacy, the church and so many other places where people have gotten to know and have a relationship with Zach. It is heart warming to know that there are many people in the Belleville area who know and care about Zach. And we know that Zachary continues to accumulate 'social capital' with the support of excellent staff who understand the importance of these social connections in his life.

## PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY HOMES' NEWEST COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Chris Semark - Director of Services

This past summer has been very productive for developing new partnerships. Giving back to our community through volunteer roles where there is true benefit to other community members is evident in these three cooperative collaborations.

The **Good Food Box Program** provides boxes of food at a reasonable cost to families in the community. People we support and our staff will be picking up food from the program's office and transporting it to our Administration building at 91 Millennium Parkway. Once it is here, the food will be sorted into specific size boxes and delivered to ten families in our community. In addition, we will be growing vegetables in our gardens so that we can provide fresh produce to them.

The **Baby Box Program** is a component of the Good Food Box Program which offers families with babies the opportunity to purchase a pre-packaged box containing baby formula/food, a

20-pack of diapers and a baby toy – again at a reasonable cost. We support this venture by receiving large supplies of diapers and sorting them into packages of twenty. These packages are delivered back to the **Baby Box Program** for families to purchase.

The third partnership is with Loyalist College, supporting their **Recycling Program**. People we support and staff are working in the cafeteria with members of the college to collect, separate and remove recyclable containers. This provides an opportunity for the people we support to interact with students from the college and opens up opportunities for relationships and building social capital.

We will continue to search out new opportunities for the people we support to give back to their community and for the development of meaningful partnerships. If you think you may have a task at hand that we could assist you with, please contact: Sharon Wright at 613-969-7407, Extension 22.

## 2008 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sharon Wright - Manager of Community Development and Outreach

In recognition of Sarah Hannah's contribution, we presented her with the "Volunteer of the Year Award" at our Annual General Meeting.

Sarah has volunteered with Plainfield Community Homes since 2005. She came to our agency as a grade nine student wanting to work towards achieving her required volunteer hours. She reached the required number of hours and beyond – contributing more than expected. Sarah chose our agency for an assignment at her school that involved bringing awareness to the community.

Sarah worked very hard in different activities for Plainfield Community Homes as a means of raising community awareness; she also handed out brochures and sold our Christmas cards. Sarah started out at Plainfield Community Homes by volunteering to spend time with Patrick and today, Sarah and Patrick continue to enjoy a true friendship which has included going to the movies, the Bulls' games, shopping and just chatting on the phone.

Sarah continues to volunteer throughout the school year, on weekends and summer holidays. Patrick was honored to present Sarah with the "Volunteer of the Year Award." Quinte West Mayor, John Williams, was also on hand to bring greetings from the City of Quinte West and to provide a framed volunteer certificate to Sarah.



Patrick and Sarah

Photo Credit: Steve Petrick, reprinted with permission from The Intelligencer

*Plainfield*  
COMMUNITY HOMES  
Supporting Community Living

# 2008 BUSINESS RECOGNITION AWARD

Sharon Wright - Manager of Community Development and Outreach

At our Annual General Meeting, we recognized one of our business partners who has provided a meaningful connection to Tara, one of the people we support. Tara has volunteered at the Loyalist Veterinary Hospital for the past two and a half years. From the beginning, Tara has enjoyed a good working relationship with everyone at the Veterinary Hospital. This mutually-respectful relationship has contributed to the success that this connection has today.

Tara began her volunteer role observing in the operating room. Her current responsibilities include working with the dogs in the day care. This experience provides Tara with the opportunity to enjoy and explore her passion for animals.

Tammy Sedore, one of the employees of the Loyalist Veterinary Hospital, has welcomed Tara into the day care with unlimited support. Tammy's leadership and acknowledgment of Tara's skill in working with animals has made this connection successful. Tara loves to volunteer at the Veterinary Hospital and looks forward to participating for many years to come.



Left to Right: Tammy, Tara and Sharon

Photo Credit: Steve Petrick, reprinted with permission from The Intelligencer

If you own or work at a business and would like to learn more about how someone we support could be a benefit to your business, please give me a call at (613) 969-7407, ext.22.

# OUR EMPLOYEES ARE BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Joan Greenwood - Director of Human Resources and Development

Plainfield Community Homes is proud of its staff members, who are contributing to our community and building social capital. In this edition, we interview Mr. James Burgess, Manager of Buildings and Property and a member of the management team.

## **Jim, who do you currently volunteer with?**

I am currently a volunteer with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Hastings & Prince Edward Branch (CMHA).

## **What is your role in the organization as a volunteer?**

I serve on the Board of Directors. Currently, I am the President of the local branch. We normally serve in a position for a two-year term and this is my second year as President. I have also served as Secretary and Vice-President. I currently sit on ad hoc committees. One of these committees was established to purchase another residence for the agency which will be our third home. The other is a Succession Planning and Recruitment Committee which was set up to replace our retiring Executive Director.

## **What is the mission of the organization?**

Our mission is to provide the people of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties with support in mental health services. This encompasses education, advocacy, counselling services, environmental support and other means to support the mental well-being of people in our community. We are a non-profit organization and work together with other community agencies such as Hastings County Social Services. Our support has evolved into a more direct service during the past few years, with the purchase and operation of two transitional housing residences. One house, a 10-bedroom duplex, supports single people, while the other home is set up for three families. We recently purchased a third home and will have it open before the beginning of the New Year.

## **Do you do any fundraising on behalf of the organization?**

Oh yes! Our local CMHA Branch is very reliant on community support from the United Way and various other community-based fundraising campaigns. Another fundraiser we use is selling tags similar to those sold by the cadets. We stand out in front of a select number of local businesses and offer tags in exchange for donations. I usually put in a few hours in front of the beer store each year doing that.

Last year, we tried a new project – “Sleep out for the Homeless” – which proved so successful that we plan to do it as an annual fundraiser. We raised over \$16,000 in that event. The City of Belleville allows us the use of the Market Square for the night, which takes on the aura of a war zone or refugee camp. There are cardboard and blanket shelters set up by individuals or groups. DJ Scotty Lalonde plays music until 11:00 p.m. and we have draws for prizes all evening. We have some dignitaries in attendance who bring words of encouragement at the beginning of the evening. Some of the people, who are connected with us through Mental Health Services, relate some very touching stories. We have a warming room set up at St. Thomas Church with free hot beverages. A local vendor parks right on the Market to sell “Fair Trade” coffee all night. In the coming year, the event will be in mid-January; I will be sleeping out again, most likely in a refrigerator box. That worked well last year. I’ll be taking pledges for my part as all of the participants do. We hope to exceed last year’s donations.

## **Can you tell us about some of the other community events that your organization has sponsored?**

Other major events from the past have included bringing orchestras and musicians to town for concerts.

## **Why do you participate as a volunteer within your community?**

I began volunteering because of my children. I started out coaching softball, then convening and, finally, joining the Minor Softball Executive. As you become involved with your children’s activities, you realize that many of the community services that are available are organized and operated by volunteers. There are so many parents who don’t have the time, or don’t take the time, to get involved in their children’s extracurricular life. I felt privileged to participate and when the kids were basically done with the local sports scene, I was invited to join the CMHA Board. I was told the agency was very reliant on volunteer support with just a small core of paid staff. I was also told of the tremendous benefits the community reaps from this agency. That was what sold me. I like what the local branch does and feel very good about being able to contribute in some way to the end result.

## **Jim, we take our hats off to you.**

**You are setting a great example for all of us and demonstrating to the community the importance of building social capital.**

# PERSON-CENTRED THINKING

Hilary Tugwood - Director of Accreditation

Sandra Coates - Chair, Quality Enhancement Committee

In June, Plainfield Community Homes had the pleasure of co-hosting, along with CQL Canada, a Person-Centred Thinking workshop, facilitated by Michael Smull. This two-day workshop was well attended by employees of Plainfield Community Homes and staff from other agencies around Ontario.

Michael is a very dynamic and humorous presenter, who challenged us to think throughout the two days. The feedback we received demonstrated high praise for Michael and the skills and tools he taught us about Person Centred Thinking.

Plainfield Community Homes subscribes to the use of Personal Outcome Measures and sees how the tools and skills from the Person-Centred Thinking workshop and Personal Outcome Measures work and fit so nicely together.

As a result, the planning package that we use incorporates many of the information-gathering tools to help us gain more detailed information about the Personal Outcomes for each of the people we support. This has really helped the teams to be able to understand more deeply the people they support and, as a result, people are living richer lives.



# EMPLOYEES - OUR GREATEST RESOURCE

Joan Greenwood - Director of Human Resources and Development

## **In the Spotlight: Plainfield Recognizes an Outstanding Staff Member**

This fall, we were all sad to see Sharon Burton, a long-standing, valued employee of Plainfield Community Homes, leave us to pursue other career opportunities with her husband and family. They will be living in the Ingersoll area where Sharon’s husband has secured a position with Toyota. Sharon brought leadership and mentorship to a new meaning at Plainfield Community Homes. She was truly loved by one and all and we will miss her. Having said that, we also wish her and her family the very best of good fortune in this next phase of their lives.

Jennifer Wickett, a long-time colleague and friend of Sharon brings us these words about Sharon:

“Any person who was lucky enough to be supported by Sharon benefited greatly from the experience. Her dedication, compassion and understanding were obvious to all. Sharon gave 150% of herself every day she worked and even on those days she didn’t. Sharon wore many hats during her twenty plus years at Plainfield—too

many to list! Here are only a few:

Sharon was a mentor to many, a teacher, a leader, an advisor, a friend and, above all, an ADVOCATE for all. The ladies at Finch Drive and their team enjoyed the past five years with Sharon. We look forward to her letters, phone calls and visits. We wish her well on this next chapter of her life and thank her for all she has taught us and given of herself over the years. We miss you!”



Sharon Burton

# NEW LEGISLATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES IN ONTARIO

John Klassen - Executive Director

On September 30th, Ontario passed the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008. This new law, once the policies and regulations have been written and it comes into force by proclamation, will replace the current Developmental Services Act.

You might ask what is different between this new law and the legislation it will be replacing? The Developmental Services Act was in force for approximately 35 years and came into effect when many people resided in institutions in the province of Ontario. The new legislation replaces old language and reflects a changed reality for people who live with an intellectual disability and gain access to services and supports so that they can participate fully in community life and know that they truly belong.

This new law was brought forward as Bill 77 in late spring of this year. Following 2nd reading of Bill 77, the Standing Committee on Social Policy held public hearings to receive presentations and written submissions on the proposed legislation. Plainfield Community Homes had a number of concerns with the proposed legislation as did several groups, organizations and individuals in Ontario. Two Board members, Janice Quade and Harold Brennan, and I arranged a meeting with our local MPP, Leona Dombrowski to register our concerns with the proposed legislation. I was also able to make a presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy in Ottawa and leave them with a written presentation of our concerns. I am pleased to report that the concerns that we registered with Ms. Dombrowski and the Standing Committee have mostly been addressed in the amendments to the legislation.

## ***What's new with this new legislation and how is it likely to affect Plainfield Community Homes?***

Well, for one, it has a new title which talks about promoting "...social inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities." This is a radical departure from the old legislation that still referenced services in facilities and residences to the recognition that people can enjoy a full life in the community with the right supports and can exercise more choice and control over the supports they get.

While the proposed legislation in Bill 77 had included 'application centres' that would assume responsibility for "...determining eligibility of a person to receive supports, administering an application process, assessing needs, setting priorities, allocating and distributing funds, making referrals to agencies, monitoring the satisfaction of a person with the outcomes that result from the support they receive..." the section on application centres has been amended to refer to "application entities" and "funding entities." The legislation is clear that the 'funding entities' will be responsible for

determining individuals' funding levels and service priority based on their assessed needs. Funding entities cannot be agencies that provide services and supports. We expect this change will allow communities to continue with a collaborative access model as we have here in Hastings and Prince Edward. We believe this is more cost efficient and relies less on bureaucratic single access portals and more on the strengths and voluntary contributions of communities to find resources and solutions to the needs of families and individuals known to the agencies participating on the 'pressures and priorities' committees.

The new Act also allows for the provision of funding for planning supports. We emphasized in our submission to the Standing Committee the importance of 'person centred planning' as a process for learning how a person wants to live and then describing what needs to be done to help the person move toward that life. This takes into consideration the whole person including the views of people that care about (and know) the person.

The legislation has retained the provision for entry into a residential setting without a warrant, but was amended to require regulations be developed to provide clarity about this authority to ensure the protection of the rights of individuals.

The legislation retained the requirement to maintain waiting lists on services. We continue to be concerned that "waiting lists" are included in the legislation and see this as legitimizing an under-funded sector.

The legislation also now includes a provision requiring agencies to have in place a complaints mechanism. We see this as a welcome provision in the new legislation.

The legislation retains the authority of the government to appoint a manager to take over services under extraordinary circumstances; however, they could only take over services funded by the Ministry.

Finally, as we had recommended in our submission, provisions have been made for groups and organizations to have input into the drafting of regulations and policies.

While there are some sections of the legislation that are somewhat worrisome depending on how this new law will be regulated and carried out, there are also a number of positive features in the legislation, including more positive language and the option of direct funding for families and individuals who want to have a greater say in where and with whom they live, the supports they receive, who provides those supports and how supports are provided.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Sharon Wright - Manager of Community Development and Outreach

In July, Plainfield Community Homes held its second annual community concert. We selected the Thursday evening leading into the Waterfront Festival weekend with the intent that it would generate a larger crowd. This year, we were also able to secure a better location for the concert – The Parrott Stage in the "heart" of our city.

The opening band, Ragged Glory, put together an acoustic tribute to Neil Young, while The Stephanie Bird band provided a range of music that kept the interest of the crowd for the rest of the evening.

Our goal was to bring more awareness to our community about who Plainfield Community Homes is and the services that we provide. A second goal was to give back to our community in a meaningful way. We achieved both goals with success.

Our free concert allowed everyone to enjoy the music and to mingle. Not only was the concert a way for Plainfield Community Homes to give back to our community, but many visitors also donated money, which amounted to \$200 and which we in turn donated to our local Food for Learning program.



Ragged Glory



Stephanie Bird Band

# SO, WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Patti Gillman - Executive Assistant

## What a Difference a Year Makes!

At our AGM in September, Executive Director John Klassen reflected back on the year that was with pride and appreciation, highlighting the organization's many successes and achievements during the 2007-08 fiscal year. He thanked the Board and the staff of Plainfield Community Homes for the success we enjoy.

Martha Carr, President, thanked the Board of Governors, management, staff, the people we support and volunteers for their contributions to a tremendous year and for their support of her as President. She noted that this has been a year of dedication by all of the Plainfield Community Homes staff which has resulted in great accomplishments and progress. She also thanked the volunteers of Plainfield Community Homes and the members of the Board of Governors, noting that the cohesive Board of Plainfield Community Homes has helped to guide the organization to its goals.

The slate of Board Members for 2007-08 is as follows:

Martha Carr, President  
Tom Raycroft, Vice-President  
Paul Richardson, Secretary/Treasurer  
Harold Brennan  
Floyd Clapp  
Evan Leuty  
April Nelles  
Janice Quade  
Martin Smit

We were delighted to have an opportunity to publicly acknowledge our appreciation of a longstanding Plainfield Community Homes supporter: Georgina Thompson. John Klassen introduced Georgina and highlighted just a few of the many important contributions Georgina made to Plainfield Community Homes over the years, punctuating those with several humorous anecdotes. Georgina responded in kind, adding some recollections of her own, and thanking Plainfield Community Homes for acknowledging her sixteen years of working with the staff and people supported by Plainfield Community Homes.



John Klassen and Georgina Thompson

Following the business and recognition portions of our AGM, the audience was treated to an outstanding keynote address by internationally renowned disability expert Dr. Mark Nagler. Born with Cerebral Palsy, Dr. Nagler triumphed over his disability by becoming the foremost expert in the Disability Studies field. Although he has never been able to write, he achieved an impressive array of professional degrees and has authored 12 books. Dr. Nagler taught at several universities and he has motivated people with his lectures and workshops on diversity and disability worldwide.

Dr. Nagler's presentation was more than a little inspiring and it was infused with the humour and wisdom that can only come from a life well lived.

In a note we recently received from Dr. Nagler, he said: "From talking to your employees, volunteers, and individuals who reside at Plainfield, I can only say in all truthfulness, literally I have never encountered a place which offers the facilities and positive surroundings of Plainfield. As a group, I can say you are really impressive."

## Thank You, U.A. Local 463 Plumbers, Steamfitters & Welders!

One cent per hour earned is donated to a charitable trust fund by the members of U.A. Local 463 Plumbers, Steamfitters & Welders. Recently, the trust fund's Board of Trustees invited associations within its jurisdiction to submit requests for funding for items that would benefit children and youth and for which no other funding is available.

In early November, Michele Macfarlane and I had the great pleasure of visiting U.A. Local 463 in Bowmanville. Business Manager, Garth Cochrane, and the rest of the organization's staff graciously welcomed Michele and I to their facility, and presented us with a cheque – payable to Plainfield Community Homes – in the amount of \$5,734!

As if that wasn't enough, we were then given a grand tour of the Local's exceptional facilities. We were amazed by what we saw and learned about the past and present of the Local and its very important role in the world of plumbing, steamfitting and welding in Ontario, along with the part it plays in the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada.

One of the wish-list items in particular that we are very excited about being able to purchase, thanks to U.A. Local 463, is an All-Terrain Wheelchair. This wheelchair will go a long way in breaking down the barriers that many of the children and youth in our Out-of-Home Respite program have in being able to fully access and participate in their community. And it will give them new freedom to enjoy a day at the beach or at a park and many other outdoor activities in terrain – like sand, snow and gravel – that can be so inhospitable to wheelchair traffic!

Thank you, U.A. Local 463 Plumbers, Steamfitters and Welders – you are truly going to make some young people very, very happy!



Left to right: Patti Gillman, Garth Cochrane, Michele Macfarlane

We sincerely appreciate all of the donations we receive at Plainfield Community Homes and we would like to thank all of our donors for their kind-hearted generosity.

## 25th Annual Mayors' Challenge Golf Tournament

2008 marked the silver anniversary of the Mayors' Challenge Golf Tournament in support of Plainfield Community Homes. The tournament once again played out in early June at the beautiful Trillium Wood Golf Course.

Our thanks once again to all of those who came out to play, including the Mayors of Belleville, Quinte West and Prince Edward County and the Warden of Hastings County. We would also like to thank Boyd Sullivan, who gave so generously of his time as tournament Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer Extraordinaire!! We are, of course, grateful to the dedicated volunteers who comprise our Golf Tournament Committee, namely: Jim Blaind, Floyd Clapp, Matt Hamilton, Karen Poste and Jody Smith. And, finally, our thanks go out to the many sponsors and prize donors – we couldn't do it without you!



Waiting for the fun to begin at Trillium Wood Golf Club