



'tis the season of hope

From Ginny's Desk

by Ginny Gillen, Executive Director

Some fairly big changes have happened at NABIS since our last newsletter. Last spring Alberta Seniors and Community Support tendered the contract for Service Coordination in the Northwest Region. If you recall, this is the contract NABIS delivers through our offices in Grande Prairie, High Prairie and at one point we also had an office in La Crete and Slave Lake.

NABIS was given notice that this might occur, as the philosophy of the Alberta Brain Injury Initiative is one of regional service delivery. However, when the contract was originally awarded to NABIS in 2001, there were no other bids from the NW region. NABIS, on the other hand, stepped forward to support a section of the northern part of the province, as is our mandate. The financial support of the contract allowed us to serve our community in an unprecedented way. We took our role very seriously and made a huge investment of Board and Staff time as well as financial support, when it was found that our government contract did not completely cover the costs of doing business in the north. All this we did gladly because we were reaching individuals and families who benefited from the service.

Having offices in the north allowed us to provide direct service to those communities. It also allowed us to begin the work of establishing relationships with individuals within the various northern health regions. We know that brain injury often straddles the health and community sectors. To provide effective support then, it is important to approach the work holistically. Further, the contract allowed the organization to bring together more voices to speak on behalf of the needs of individuals with brain injury and their families – a vital component of the work of the Society.

So it was a loss when the NW contract was awarded to Blue Heron of Barrhead and ASLS of Grimshaw. A loss, not least of which was the wonderful personnel we worked with, but also those developing relationships that were being established. However there is a bright side. Those responsible for awarding the contract decided that two service providers for such a large region would be more appropriate and further, the staff complement to do the job was increased. This will positively impact the survivors and Care-givers in the region and that is the most important thing!



I continue to work with the Alberta Abilities Lodges Society. This Society was formed for two reasons. Committee members wanted to establish a wellness centre at Blue Lake in William Switzer Provincial Park near Hinton. Blue Lake was once an outdoor recreation centre run by the University of Alberta and then it was turned over to a private entrepreneur for a number of years. This year the Government of Alberta has put out a request for proposals for development of the Blue Lake site. Our Society would like to see the establishment of a centre that would meet the needs of those with disabilities and seniors, similar to William Watson Lodge in Kananaskis.

Besides the Blue Lake project the Society is committed to working with campground owners across Alberta to make sure their facilities are accessible to those with disabilities. Further the Society has established a travel endowment fund through the Edmonton Community Foundation. We know that individuals with disabilities on a fixed income are challenged by transportation availability and cost. We hope to grow this fund over time to meet this very important need. For more information about the Alberta Abilities Lodges Society and its Travel endowment fund, please visit the website at www.albertaabilitieslodges.ca or contact Ross Wein at 780-436-0141 or rosswein@shaw.ca.

Have a merry Christmas everyone! I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas Party being held jointly by EBIRS, Networks, and NABIS on December 13th!

NETWORKS!

an Activity Centre
for adult survivors
of brain injury

#327, 10106 - 111 Ave
Edmonton, AB T5G 0B4
Open weekdays 10 am - 3 pm

Call 474-3363 Fax: 474-3310
and ask for George, Jackie or Darlene

