

Report from Community Living Department

Joint Submissions by Community Living Supervisor Melanie Mendonca and Executive Assistant Diane Raniseth

Although challenges are an ongoing part of the Community Living Program, this year the Department was faced with some unique circumstances impacting our residents which called upon the strength and resourcefulness of all of our employees who care for these individuals. Community Living employees were saddened when a long term resident died unexpectedly following heart failure in October 2006. Staff also said goodbye to another long-standing resident whose increasing health problems required specialized care, and he was transferred to a facility more suited to meet his increasing health needs. Employees at one of the homes received palliative care training to better care for one of that home's individuals who is now terminally ill. On a positive note, we welcomed a young woman into one of the group homes, and she has made progress since joining the program.

Despite the often difficult changes, the program saw some lighter moments throughout the year. Employees and residents enjoyed the celebrations which are an ongoing part of the program. Parties were held to celebrate the birthdays of all of our persons served, and there were celebrations at Christmas, Halloween, Valentine's Day and Easter. A barbecue was also held to bring some fun to the 2007 summer season.

Management and employees have had a respite from the pressures experienced in 2005-06 associated with the tremendous amount of work that was involved to achieve an Accreditation designation through CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). Although the pressures of the initial accreditation process have eased, the program practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure standards continue to be met and adjustments made to better meet the needs of the program.

In April of this year, Community Living Program Director Madeleine Beaton was required to take an extensive leave while she dealt with the results of a broken leg. Doman House Supervisor Melanie Mendonca stepped in to take on many of the duties usually managed by the Program Director. We thank Melanie for her diligence in handling these extra tasks while continuing with her supervisory role at Doman House. Acknowledgments also go out to all of our house supervisors, Lucy Acheson, Les Babij, Marina Hagus, Mary Penrice, and Wendy Tan, who stepped to the fore to meet the extra demands this situation placed on the entire supervisory team.

We are happy to report that the practice of community involvement continues for the 29 residents who are part of the program. These individuals are kept busy with participation in lifeskills tasks and other activities such as day programs, swimming, bowling, shopping, recycling bingo and movies.

As we review the past year, it is becoming evident that the program will have an increasing need to meet the escalating health needs of an aging client population. The Department will be looking at programs and strategies for our employees and the individuals we serve to respond to this new challenge.

This has been a year of great changes in our client group, and we say thank you to our Community Living employees who take special care every day to meet their needs, and for meeting the new challenges which are before us.

