

## Survey Summary

### **Gateway Society – Services for Persons with Autism has strengths in many areas.**

- Gateway is congratulated on celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008.
- The organization benefits from the stable and supportive leadership of its board members, many of whom have served for numerous years. Board composition includes representation from various stakeholder communities with professional specialties representative of the local community possessing a variety of perspectives and skill sets. Family members of individuals served by Gateway serve on the board. The board is encouraged to continue to address its priority of establishing a defined plan and process for continual recruitment of members who bring ever greater diversity to it.
- The executive director is highly respected by and has engendered a high level of trust and support from her staff, the board, families and caregivers of the persons served, and other stakeholders. Under her leadership, Gateway has continued to build positive relationships within the social services sector to strengthen ties with other service providers and to maintain excellent working relationships with funding entities. She is known to be “always there” for her staff and has nurtured a work culture in which everyone’s contributions are recognized and applauded and work is respected. She promotes teamwork, an eminently person-and family-centred focus, and a strong but flexible foundation of service with a pragmatic approach to service provision. She has brought a business-oriented focus and expertise to Gateway that has been responsible, in great measure, for its financial turnaround. Her intense commitment and work ethic, as well as the model she sets for staff members and others, underpins the reputation Gateway has earned over its 30 years of service as a compassionate organization that has been responsible for touching and transforming lives.
- Gateway is fortunate to employ loyal, highly skilled, and passionately committed management and staff members, many of whom have attained notable longevity of service with the organization. Staff members appear to work with a team ethic at all times among themselves and with the executive director. They are positively motivated and supported, and their work is respected. Comments made by various stakeholders regarding staff focus on the high level of trust with which families regard staff include, “families are supported to become involved at whatever level they feel comfortable,” “families are kept in the loop at all times,” and “their opinions are frequently solicited and valued by staff.” Other comments include, “the levels of staff cooperation and sophistication are outstanding,” “staff are keen on learning new techniques and always open to input from others,” “staff always operate as a team,” “staff are highly professional and competent and work efficiently,” and “staff continually go above and beyond to assist parents to navigate the service system.”
- The board and leadership are commended for bringing together a cross section of executives and exempt staff members, including some based in the northern region, to engage with the board in updating the organization’s strategic plan in November 2007. By all reports, it was an uplifting, stimulating, interactive, and very productive session.
- The organization is congratulated on recently released news that it will enter into partnership with Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) to develop a site of excellence in the province that will be linked to best practices and serve as a unique center for services to children with autism in the province. Organizational staff members will collaborate with

CLBC to provide training and community capacity building expertise needed to expand services in other parts of the province.

- In July 2006, Gateway received an award and recognition by the International Association of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention as one of five international sites of excellence, recognizing the quality of Gateway's non-violent crisis intervention training and quality of its instructors.
- The board, leadership, and staff are commended for the financial turnaround they have achieved through the implementation of strategic planning to diversity funding sources and to reduce risk exposure, thus better insulating the organization from the volatility of any one revenue stream. Diversification has included increases in corporate and individual donations, a contribution of \$150,000 from Variety – The Children's Charity, and various fundraising events sponsored by the organization and Gateway Society Foundation. The organization is encouraged to continue and build on the momentum of its present efforts to explore and apply for grant funding, specifically funding for supported employment as a new optional service direction for the persons served.
- Gateway is commended for the strides it has made to be respectful and supportive of the cultural backgrounds and practices of all of the persons served, family, and staff. This includes the translation and availability of fact sheets about the organization in a number of languages and the review of the cultural diversity policy at the time of new staff orientation as well as annually within each of its programs.
- It has been a long standing internal policy and practice at Gateway that every staff member, regardless of position, receives first aid, CPR, and non-violent crisis intervention training and certifications before he or she can begin working in order to optimize the safety of both the persons served and staff members and to limit loss exposure for the organization.
- The program managers and house managers provide outstanding leadership, program development, and caring services by promoting the mission and goals of the organization.
- It is evident throughout service areas that Gateway staff members are held in high regard by the individuals and families served. Staff members go beyond the scope of service, and they clearly respect and respond to the desires and needs of the individuals and families served.
- Gateway demonstrates a commitment to community integration for the families and individuals served.
- The staff commitment to the organization was evident, with every member interviewed including high satisfaction with training and staff development opportunities, support from management, and the accessibility to communicate with supervisors up to and including the executive director.
- Gateway homes are well maintained and blend nicely within their neighbourhood locations. Modifications to meet the needs of each person served were evident, ensuring a safe environment.
- Gateway is complimented for the training opportunities provided to family members, CLBC, and other stakeholders.
- Gateway has pursued donations from the community to provide the children with playground equipment designed to provide sensory stimulations.
- Gateway is commended for its development of the lending library for families and members of the community at large. Books, videos, and equipment are lent free of charge to individuals who want more training in the area of best practices in autism. Families from the northern region find this information very helpful because there are limited resources to

families in the more rural regions. Families are also able to try out equipment or training materials before purchase to ensure that their child will benefit from and use the materials.

- Gateway is complimented for the longevity of the family care providers. It is evident that persons served in this program believe they belong and are members of the family. Each person served has his or her own private space in the family home, but also feels quite comfortable in sharing the common areas of the home with his or her family care providers and extended family and guests.
- The organization provides a community integrated day program that is very person centered as evidenced by the input provided by persons served. Each person served has daily input into the activities he or she wishes to participate in within the community as well as day trips the program can take to other communities. Person served also talk about the respect that staff members show to them and how safe they feel with the staff in the program.
- Management staff from the northern region is complemented for the development and use of informational sheets regarding consultants' travels into remote regions when meeting with families. Specific information is kept regarding consultants' weekly schedules, daily schedules, travel destinations, check-in times, and which routes will be used in case of emergencies. Consultants also use satellite phones that are more reliable than the phone system utilized in the past.

**In the following area Gateway Society – Services for Persons with Autism demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.**

- Gateway has a long and remarkable track record of going “above and beyond” to make its staff available throughout the province in an on-call capacity to respond to local and distant requests for assistance, some of them urgent, to conduct training and address individual-specific consultative needs. Recently, in response to needs expressed by the families of persons with autism, including those whose sons or daughters are on a waitlist for services, Gateway developed and launched a three-and-a-half day competency-based training program. This was extremely well received by families and caregivers in the province and also by other agencies and external entities. The training consists of two-and-a-half days of autism training and one day of “safe management of disruptive behaviour’ training. The latter module is based on the concepts and guidelines of non-violent crisis intervention, but does not include these techniques. Based on the success of this training, the Crisis prevention Institute (CPI) subsequently invited Gateway to collaborate with it in developing its own non-violent crisis intervention caregiver/parent training program for Autism Spectrum Disorders. (ASD). Gateway remained involved with CPI throughout the process of development by means of discussion, sharing resources, and providing feedback. CPI recognized Gateway’s tailoring of the non-violent crisis intervention program to the ASD population and, as a result, invited Gateway to review CPI’s draft, “ASD Applications of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training” in Toronto. Upon completion of that review, CPI formalized the ASD program and now offers it internationally. Gateway’s other non-violent crisis intervention instructors have since attended the new non-violent crisis intervention training program.