

# The LINK

February 2016



**"Just so you know!" ...**

**Hearts and Heroes!** It's almost here!



You still have time to get your tickets for February 13<sup>th</sup>!

## Board Chair Report

Hello, everyone! Just a little note from your Board Chairperson....

The spirit of our people here at LINX connect has never been in doubt. Our staff has consistently and repeatedly given their heart and soul to our clients and their families. Our volunteers are without question some of the most marvellous individuals on this earth. Our community has shown over and over again its commitment to our clients and their desire and right to participate in all aspects of life.

Now it's our turn... Our turn to show our support for our staff, volunteers and our clients. Our annual fundraiser, Hearts and Heroes, is here again. While we cannot ignore the impact of our depressed economy, I am asking you to come out and support this amazing organization on February 13, 2015 - the hearts and heroes of LINX connect centre.

Warm regards!  
~ Ed

**Executive Director** Nicole Fuhse

Email: [linxexec@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxexec@linxconnect.ca),  
Emergency cell 587~989~5691

**Residential Manager** Ronni DeLeavey

Email: [linxres@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxres@linxconnect.ca)  
Emergency cell 780~935~2772

**Day Program Manager** Heather Jones

Email: [linxday@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxday@linxconnect.ca)

**Office Manager** Laurie Savill

Email: [linxadmin@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxadmin@linxconnect.ca)

**Dates to remember:**

Feb 13 – Hearts and Heroes

Feb 19 – Timesheet/invoices due

Feb 22 – Easter Purdy's orders due

Mar 1-3 – CET



**Board Members**

Ed Boender – Chairperson

Eileen Radawetz – Vice-Chair

Kim Dozois – Treasurer

Susan Boyle – Secretary

Maria Semrau – Director

Annis Mattiussi – Director

Ryan McKinney – Client Rep

**Recycling Donation Challenge**

(as of the end of January)



\$ 64.50



You can now safely donate to LINX online at [www.linx.ngo](http://www.linx.ngo)



# Executive Director Report

Have you noticed that our website has changed? We are now simply at [www.linx.ngo](http://www.linx.ngo). Are you wondering why we made the change? Here are just a few of the reasons:

1. Only legally recognized NGOs, ONGs, charities, and nonprofits can register .NGO and .ONG
2. .NGO and .ONG web sites and email addresses communicate to donors and supporters that your nonprofit is credible, trustworthy, and legal
3. To secure the domain name of your choice and protect your brand long-term
4. To get listed in a global database of validated NGO's, ONGs, charities, and nonprofits.

We are always trying to make those changes that bring LINX further and recognized for all the hard work they do. For more information, see <http://www.nptechforgood.com/2015/05/17/4-reasons-why-your-nonprofit-should-register-ngo-and-ong/>.

Finally, and as always, I would like to thank everyone for all of their support, and wish you a happy, healthy and safe **Hearts and Heroes** and Valentine's Day month!

~ Nicole

## Day Program Report

WOW, where did January go? It's hard to believe we are in February all ready. As we take on February, we have Family Day coming up on Monday February 15, 2016 and LINX will be closed on this day. Enjoy this special day with your family or friends.

We continue to look for ways our clients at LINX can give back to our community, so if you have any ideas or questions, please feel free to let me know. Happy Valentine's Day!

### February Lunch Snacks are:

- 🐾 February 5- Corn Chowder with Sausage
- 🐾 February 12- Salmon Chowder
- 🐾 February 19- Pumpkin Soup
- 🐾 February 26- Clam Chowder

~ Heather

## Hearts and Heroes

Less than 2 weeks until our 2<sup>nd</sup> Hearts & Heroes Event. Great food, great music and great friends! Have you got your tickets? If not, please visit our Facebook page to click a link. Silent Auction items are still being accepted. If you have any questions please contact Laurie Savill at [linxadmin@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxadmin@linxconnect.ca) or (780) 980-9423 (ext. 223) or Susan Boyle at [s.boyle@shaw.ca](mailto:s.boyle@shaw.ca) or (780) 986-0464. Hope to see you there!



## Residential Program Report

It is February and what better topic for February than to talk about what you love. Do you love what you do? If not maybe you might consider becoming a Support Home Provider for LINX. What is a SHP you ask? They are just regular people who would be interested in having someone with a developmental disability live with them. The level of independence varies client to client (some need regular supervision; some are fairly independent and transitioning into their own homes one day). **The money earned for a support home is tax exempt. You would also receive tax exempt room and board from the client.** We currently have multiple clients requiring a new support home provider. Most clients attend a day program from 9 to 4 Monday to Friday. Clients come with different amounts of respite available. Training is provided. If you are interested or know someone that might be interested contact Ronni DeLeavey at 780-935-2772 ext 225. Or email at [linxres@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxres@linxconnect.ca).

~ Ronni

## MANDT Moment

A couple years ago MANDT added some really interesting what I call "Cool Brain Stuff" when I am teaching. I read MANDT's weekly post on my Facebook, this week they mentioned Dr. Bruce Perry. Guess what my MANDT moment will be about? You guessed it additional information I found on You Tube. If you are interested follow the link to the SevenSlideSeries: State-dependent Functioning. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uCn7VX6BPQ>



# Through our eyes...

## Oh ya!

Written by: Anthony, Carly, Curtis, Don, Meagan, Michael, Matt

It takes many different people to make up the wonderful fabric of life we enjoy at LINX. This year we have been blessed with the addition of a new thread to that fabric. **Cynthia McMillan** enrolled her daughter here in 2015 and she came on the LINX scene with loads of energy and a great sense of humour. Cynthia came in to the Newsletter Class to share some of the experiences her family had when looking for a day program to meet the needs of her daughter who deals with 18Q syndrome a rare genetic disorder. We had the opportunity to ask her questions and learn more about her daughter and their family.

**Newsletter Class:** Why did you as a family choose to join LINX?

**Cynthia:** We heard about it through PDD, we were told about the two different programs in Leduc. Honestly we didn't really know what the programs entailed. We called the other program and were told there was no space for our daughter. Our only option at that time was LINX. We have no regrets that LINX was our only choice it has worked out well. In hindsight LINX was the best choice to meet our daughter's needs.

**Newsletter Class:** How long did your daughter go without the benefit of services after leaving the high school environment, and how did that affect her and your family.

**Cynthia:** The first year I felt it was fine but in the second year we realized it was time for her to move on with her life and establish a healthy routine. I work ¾ time and my husband works full time and therefore the home support and social

contact was not there for her during the day. She had made a deal with her Dad that she could stay home one year after leaving high school because she had attended school for 17 years and to be fair she needed a break from that. Unfortunately the process of getting her into a program and getting funding in place took way longer than expected, and she was the one who really suffered for that wait.

**Newsletter Class:** What were the challenges you needed addressed when you came to LINX.

**Cynthia:** As a family we needed our daughter to learn how to control her behavior. We feel that LINX has helped our daughter in achieving some management of her behavior, and our expectation is that that improvement will continue. Another challenge was to improve social skills and build connections with others. For sure, she has extended her social connections outside of the program hours with connections she has made at LINX. A major goal for our daughter was to gain job skills and find employment. She is now working two days a week in the centre in a paid position and once a week with Coffee News. As her parent I really didn't know that jobs would be focussed on and so really LINX has surpassed our expectations.

**Newsletter Class:** You said your daughter has shown marked improvement in her behavior since coming to LINX what challenges do you still deal with and are there any new unexpected challenges that have come up since attending the day program.

**Cynthia:** I believe her greatest challenge

now is dealing with some social situations that have come as a result of expanding her social circles. She also is dealing with the affect changes to her routine have on her emotionally. The more she attends on a daily basis the more improvement we see because the expectations are consistent and always reinforced. So we expect to see continued improvement in this area.

**Newsletter Class:** What are you seeing transfer over to your home life from LINX that has improved things at home.

**Cynthia:** She is taking Emotional Management classes weekly and since she's been regularly attending she has developed skills to deal with her emotions and she now is using those tools and skills at home when she needs them. She has also been encouraging the use of those tools and skills to her family. It's a benefit to all of us.

**Newsletter Class:** If you were to meet a family from Leduc that was in the similar situation to yours a year ago what would your words of advice be to them?

**Cynthia:** I would encourage them to apply to this program at LINX because it has helped our daughter immensely and it's a fantastic program for anyone with special needs because the program is there to address all the needs my daughter has. I don't know if this kind of service is available in all towns and cities but I'm just happy to be a part of this one.

**Newsletter Class:** If you could choose a word to describe your experience at LINX what would it be?

**Cynthia:** Terrific, fantastic, continued learning, supportive.....there is probably so much more but that is all for now.



Parents! Clients! Employers! Staff! Neighbours! If you would like to be a part of or refer someone for "Through our Eyes", please contact Nicole at 780-980-9423 ext 222 or [linxexec@linxconnect.ca](mailto:linxexec@linxconnect.ca).

At LINX we have many participants who have the privilege of traveling with family or their Support Home staff to many wonderful places such as Nova Scotia, Alaska Cruise, Hawaii Cruise, Cuba and Disney Land. But what about the people who cannot travel with family or Caregivers or can but would like to have a trip that is just their own.

The diligent members of the newsletter class looked for ways for this to happen for participants of LINX. Wow what a chore that was. In Canada there is only one Travel Agency that advertises this type of trip planning. Unfortunately they combine people of all disabilities so if you plan a trip with them you may be included in a group that caters to those in wheelchairs whether or not you yourself need one. Or you may be included with a group of seniors with cognitive impairment. How can a person who needs some help to travel independently travel with people of the same age and interests and abilities?

The group then googled 'how can a developmentally challenged adult travel' and we found seven items located in the United States. Two of those agencies stood out to us as viable options for our participants. One is not however available to our clients as Canadians. We wrote **Hammer Travel**, a company that provides travel experiences for adults with developmental challenges. They choose several different trips to put on and people from all over the United States can participate. Many great friendships are developed and continue on long after the trips are over. Hammer travel responded to our email the same day we sent it; **Ann Martinka of Hammer Travel** apologized that her services were not available here in Canada. She shared the history of Hammer travel "*Hammer Travel started about 7 years ago, after 2 men that worked in a group home, took a group fishing. They realized how much the guys looked forward to traveling each year, even if it was for a short period of time.*" This is something that some staff at LINX have had the opportunity to do as well and felt the same way about the people they travelled with. What an awesome opportunity for staff and clients.

We also found information about a Non Profit group based in California called **New Directions.** Dee Duncan started New Directions in 1985 after having worked for eight years in a large residential facility for adults with developmental disabilities. As part of her duties at this facility, she frequently arranged travel vacations for its two hundred residents. Of all the therapeutic programs that this care facility provided, the travel vacations stood out as the most beneficial. The tours proved to be the perfect environment for "hands-on" education (so much better than classroom or textbook education!), for practicing independent living skills in the "real" world, and for fostering flexibility in new or different situations (a critical need for all persons with brain impairment). In addition, the tours were the ideal avenue for promoting acceptance and inclusion among the general population. The benefits were so enormous that Dee felt compelled to offer these programs to others with brain impairments. She researched and found no other organization that provided this type of specialized travel service.

In 2010 **New Directions** celebrated its 25th Anniversary! We have successfully taken over 12,000 people on life-enriching vacations all over the world--promoting inclusion all along the way. Currently with an annual budget of over \$1,000,000 we offer more than 40 travel vacation programs annually, a variety of day tours, and an international exchange program, all of which serve approximately 600 participants annually. Most participants live in the Southern California area, but some live in other states and even in other countries. To date, our youngest has been 7 and oldest 92. Their website is <http://www.newdirectionstravel.org> and as they said they do provide travel for those from other countries.

This would be a great opportunity but it was met with different reactions even in our small group of newsletter reporters. Out of eight people two people were opposed and the other six were interested in that type of opportunity. The people who were opposed (we always ask for the reason why) said that it would not be a comfortable thing for them to do they would rather travel with people they know and the other person could not articulate their reason. The people who felt positive about this type of travel felt it was a great way to meet new people in a safe well planned travel environment.

The opportunity is not here in Canada but maybe it is time for this type of travel service here in the Great White North. It is said that every person who voices their opinion represents ten thousand people who will not voice that same opinion but hold it. The newsletter class encourages participants at any agency in Alberta, or Canada to speak up and look into ways to develop this kind of travel experience for Canadians with developmental challenges.

# Our "... of the month" club!

There are so many people who make our world a better place. So, we have decided they needed individual recognition. Please help us celebrate our Citizen of the Month, Residential Staff of the month, Staff of the Month, and Employer of the month. If you see someone in any of these categories that you would like to see recognized, please let us know!

## Citizen of the Month

**Dexter Croft!** Dexter is an engaging young man who continues to show strengths in all areas. He is a dedicated employee at his place of employment. He takes his job very seriously, taking pride in making sure his job is completed to its fullest potential. Dexter is a friend to all here at LINX. He will go out of his way to establishing new friendships. Awesome Job Dexter. Keep up the fantastic work!!!

## Employer of the Month

**Flaman!** Flaman's is one of our supportive employers. Last year, Flaman's hired 2 of our staff who continue to work with them daily. Thank you for your ongoing support to our clients and the staff that attend with them each and every day. Dexter and Cory, have flourished and grown since being employed with Flaman's and are happy to express that at the end of their day!!!

## Day Staff of the Month

**Colleen Hawkins!** Colleen is no Veteran when it comes to our clients at LINX. Since her integration into her role as Job Coach, from Day Program Manager, she is happy to back and doing what she loves. The clients are very happy to have her resume this role. She is a very hard worker and always has a smile on her face. There isn't any task that Colleen will not do or take on, and always willing to help out whenever she can. She is respected by all clients and her peers. Thank you Colleen for your positive attitude and team player support. Welcome Back!!!

## Residential Staff of the month

**Jenny Balding!** Jenny is one of our newer staff. She has been able to come up with some great ideas of different ways to work with some of our clients. She will even be presenting a project at our next residential Managers Meeting. I am really excited and hope that the inspiration boards will help our clients talk about their goals. Way to go Jenny I am super excited to see what you come up with next.

## LINX Employers



**Julia Roberts, Stuttering** - Julia Roberts is an Academy Award winning American film actress and former fashion model. Roberts has become the highest paid actress in the world, topping the annual power list of top earning female stars for four consecutive years (2002-2005). Julia Roberts admitted the fact that she stuttered when she was younger without ever going into much detail, but she now speaks fluidly and is a respected actress. ~ [www.disabled-world.com](http://www.disabled-world.com)

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# LINUX Employers!

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