



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

First Annual CLBC Staff Conference

*Meeting the Promise of
a New Beginning:*

*Preparing for the
Challenges Ahead*



Conference Report

June 1, 2006

Overview of the Conference

Community Living British Columbia [CLBC] held its first annual staff conference in Richmond on March 2 & 3, 2006. The participants included:

- ◆ 275 Facilitators, Quality Service Analysts, administrative, senior management and headquarters' staff, Community Planning and Development managers, Quality Service managers and Board members
- ◆ 25 community and government representatives

The goal of the conference was to identify ways CLBC can become an organization whose work is consistent with its vision, principles and mandate. Because the staff are CLBC's most valuable resource, the conference highlighted their work and presented topics that would encourage, support and energize staff as they work to address future challenges and successfully implement CLBC's new service delivery model.

A one-day pre conference event on safeguards also took place on March 1st for a group of 55 staff and community members.

This report provides an overview of this important first annual staff conference.

Organizing Committee

- ◆ **Brian Salisbury** - Director, Strategic Planning, CLBC
- ◆ **Bill Tidsbury** - Manager, Community Planning and Development, CLBC, Vernon
- ◆ **Stephen Russell** - Manager, Community Planning and Development, CLBC, Courtenay
- ◆ **Grant Huffman** - Manager, Quality Services, CLBC, Kamloops
- ◆ **Jai Birdi** - Program Manager, CLBC
- ◆ **Nancy Hamilton** - Facilitator, Abbotsford Development Site, CLBC
- ◆ **Michele Frewin** - Administrative staff, CLBC Headquarters
- ◆ **Dan Collins** - Executive Director, Langley Association for Community Living

Table of Contents

Overview of the Conference	2
Keynote Speakers	3
Conference Facilitator	3
Conference Program and Speakers	3
Opening Keynote Address	4
Major Conference Highlights	5
Pre Conference Event.....	5
Acknowledging the Work of the Development Site Staff	5
Key Conference Learnings	6
What Kind of Organization Do Staff Want to Work For?	7
Learning Journal.....	7
Networking and Fun.....	8
Closing Plenary	8
Closing Slide Show	10
Next Year's Conference	10
Appendix 1 - Conference Feedback	10

Keynote Speakers

Michael Kendrick and John Lord served as keynote speakers. Both are highly respected for their national and international work during the past two decades to promote flexible and responsive community supports and services.

- ◆ **Michael Kendrick** is a consultant in human services and community work with ongoing work in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland, England, Nicaragua, Honduras, Ethiopia, Guatemala and Belgium. His interests and writings include leadership, service quality, creating safeguards for vulnerable persons, social integration, change, innovation, values, advocacy, the role of individual persons and small groups in creating advances, evaluation, alternatives to bureaucracy, personalized approaches to supporting people, and reform in human services.
- ◆ **John Lord** is a researcher and consultant who founded the Centre for Research and Education in Human Service and served as its first coordinator. He and his colleagues pioneered participatory action research in human services. John has conducted research on individualized supports, independent planning and facilitation, and individualized funding and recently chaired the Ontario Round Table on Individualized Funding. He has worked extensively in BC and across Canada on human service system design issues. John is an expert on community development and the role that community plays in the lives of vulnerable citizens. John is a parent of four children, including an adult daughter with a disability.



John Lord & Michael Kendrick

Conference Facilitator



John Talbot

John Talbot acted as the conference Facilitator. John has over 30 years of experience as an executive, consultant, practitioner and trainer in the public, non-profit and private sectors. He has worked in all regions of BC and internationally, and has effectively dealt with economic, environmental and social issues.

John is principal of his own consulting company and specializes in community and economic development, strategic planning and organizational development, facilitation, mediation and negotiation, training and project management. He was also involved in the planning and development work leading to the creation of CLBC.

John's primary roles were to serve as the conference master of ceremonies, synthesize the many discussions and identify key "learnings" that took place throughout the two day conference.

Conference Program and Speakers

You can view the entire conference program, including a detailed description of individual sessions and their respective speakers, by visiting <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/staffconference2006/>. A number of presentations are also available to be downloaded in PDF format.

Over 100 staff and community members also completed an on line conference evaluation. This information is found in Appendix 1.

Opening Keynote Address

Michael Kendrick began his opening keynote by congratulating everyone on the creation of CLBC which he said is *"a wonderful new chance . . . to make a difference . . . if used properly . . ."* Michael reminded people an opportunity exists to solve old problems using new eyes, but that with this *"promise of a new beginning"* comes a duty to *"recognize that there is a lot of potential in the lives of people disabilities that is yet to be realized."* What flows from this, he said, is a need to understand that CLBC, and each and every person who represents the new organization, will be judged by what they do, or don't do, in the process of honouring the promise in people's lives.

Michael identified some key "signposts" [summarized below] that will determine the character of CLBC that people can also look to as a kind of reminder of how they might behave in the face of both responsibilities and opportunities.

- ◆ **Right Relationship** – This term is borrowed from Buddhism and describes a properly ethical relationship. If done right, people with disabilities and their families will say publicly that in their dealings with CLBC they've been treated fairly and ethically, and with great respect. Building honourable relationships with individuals with disabilities and families will be a great and profound legacy that everyone can contribute to, and will be the litmus test of whether CLBC develops authentic partnerships.
- ◆ **Discipline of Results** - Results speak louder than words and are the real test of everything that is promised. CLBC needs to be as careful as possible and to promise only what it is certain it can do, and to be honest when it can't do something. The importance of these *"discipline results"* is that real results will speak for themselves.
- ◆ **More Choices and Options** – Because systems can constrain people with disabilities into too few options, much of their potential is never fulfilled. They don't have the necessary pathways to move forward in ways that respects their uniqueness as human beings. To be more innovative, and give people a wider range of choices and options, the process of innovation must be supported. Real innovation, however, requires a lot of ground work long before results show themselves.
- ◆ **Rome Wasn't Built in a Day** - In today's culture, there is a sense that things can be done very quickly. CLBC has to be very careful about this because high-level goals and ideas must be embedded in very practical projects. To think things out and build the system properly, thus laying the foundation for the future, will take months and years.
- ◆ **Organizational Transformation** – Personal transformation must accompany organizational transformation. People who don't believe they need to change won't help organizational transformation, because they no longer address the big questions. Real organizational transformation requires people to struggle with personal values, while developing their competencies. This involves coming to know what the right thing to do is, and taking personal responsibility for creating a better future.

Michael concluded his keynote by reminding everyone that they are part of broader movement that helped to create CLBC and each of us must take our role in that movement very seriously.

. . . it is not CLBC's mission to act alone to change the world. It is CLBC's mission to find its allies amongst parents . . . families . . . people with disabilities . . . professionals . . . civil servants . . . community people . . . It is only in unity that broad social movements have their impact . . . CLBC would be very wise to unify that movement to seek each and every opportunity to turn divisions into unity . . . CLBC can be a great good force for unifying us by recognizing first of all that there are other forces at work besides CLBC and seeking the ways that we can partner with our allies and friends both in the community and in fact to some extent in the broad international community as well.

You can listen to Michael's entire opening keynote remarks by visiting this [link](#).

Major Conference Highlights

Pre Conference Event

A pre-conference event for 55 CLBC staff and community members was held on March 1, 2006. The goal was to begin to develop a strategy to support the implementation of intentional safeguards, both informal and formal, to help protect vulnerable people and quality in their lives, including safeguards directed at the limitations, weaknesses and possible absence of community support systems. The workshop addressed four key topics, each of which began with a 45-60 minute presentation by Michael Kendrick. This was followed by both small group work and open discussion to generate ideas. The four areas were:

- ◆ What is the nature of vulnerability?
- ◆ What is the role of intentional safeguards in offsetting vulnerability?
- ◆ How do we create safeguards in everyday life?
- ◆ How can the system partner with communities to safeguard vulnerable people?

The final hour was spent brainstorming in small groups, and as a large group, to identify key elements that should be part of a comprehensive safeguarding strategy, and make suggestions about "next steps" that CLBC can take to develop and implement a comprehensive safeguarding approach to vulnerable people. To review the recorded summary notes, you can visit this [link](#).

"Intentional safeguards can be thought of as conscious design or practice features that can variably be added on, built in or strengthened in order to preserve or enhance something of value in a situation and thereby better manage the vulnerabilities of people and situations."

Michael Kendrick

Acknowledging the Work of Development Site Staff



Some of the many staff from the CLBC development site

In November 2005, CLBC began operating a development site in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Langley where the new service delivery model was implemented and "tested" prior to starting full provincial implementation. During the opening plenary, Community Planning and Development Vice President Doug Woollard, and Quality Services' Vice President Carol Goozh recognized development site staff for their hard work and dedication over the past few months. Amongst the gifts staff received was a "guinea pig" for their valuable role in "field testing" key service delivery components that included:

- ◆ Facilitator and Quality Service Analyst roles and how they work together
- ◆ Converting paper files to electronic files
- ◆ Information management systems
- ◆ Person-centred approach to developing support plans
- ◆ Individual and Family Support Policy and Waitlist Policy

Nancy McNeill was also recognized for her leadership as the development site Project Manager during this critical period.



Development site Project Manager Nancy McNeill

Key Conference Learnings

Some of the key “learnings” for CLBC that resulted from the dialogue with staff were:

- ◆ There is a need to think clearly about the content and process CLBC will use to train staff in the area of community development. Staff recognize that the knowledge and skills that are central to effective community building is fundamental to achieving the goals of the service delivery model.
- ◆ The staff wants additional information about the reasons for choosing the new service delivery model, and the expected benefits associated with it. While many staff are excited about the “possibilities”, further information would help them to better understand the context and expectations of their new roles.
- ◆ While staff appreciated the opportunity to discuss the development site in the ***How Quality Service Analysts and Facilitators Work Together in Practice*** session, many wanted to learn more about what was learned from the first development site and how these results will be incorporated into the process to transform to the new service delivery model.
- ◆ Staff have questions about the process that will be used to assist individuals wanting to move their funding from one service provider to another to pursue new support options.
- ◆ Staff want to have the training, knowledge and resources needed to do an exemplary job and to better understand how to manage workload issues.
- ◆ Many staff commented positively on CLBC’s recognition at the start of the conference of the contribution made by development site staff and would like to see this kind of process become a model for future conferences.
- ◆ Some staff are experiencing anxiety about the speed of change and want to understand more about CLBC’s change management strategy and how they will be supported in this process.

Notwithstanding these issues, many staff also indicated that they felt much more optimistic about the future than they did a year ago.

Two sessions that were viewed as overwhelmingly positive and helped staff to get a better sense of the future were:

- ◆ ***How Quality Service Analysts and Facilitators Work Together in Practice***
- ◆ ***Straight Talk***



CEO Rick Mowles answers staff questions in Straight Talk

The two sessions that focussed on ***How Quality Service Analysts and Facilitators Work Together in Practice*** provided staff with some of the practical information they’ve been asking for, as well as a better sense of how the new model will work in practice. This information was helpful to staff from the province’s more remote areas where there has been some anxiety about how the model will work, particularly where Quality Service offices are some distance away.

The two ***Straight Talk*** sessions with CEO, Rick Mowles were by far the most well received, with participants commenting that they were able to openly discuss tough implementation issues.

Staff also indicated that they would like regular opportunities during the transition process to discuss key issues and to receive clear and direct answers.

What Kind of Organization Do Staff Want to Work For?

During the conference Penny Soderena and Barb Goode, self advocates from AimHi [Prince George Association for Community Living and the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, respectively], asked CLBC staff members about the kind of organization they wanted to work for.

Barb and Penny's "Top 9" responses were presented during the closing plenary, along with a quote that best captured the meaning of each response.



Barb Goode

- 1. PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST** - *I would like to work for an organization that truly puts the needs of people with disabilities first, and responds to their needs in a timely and wholehearted way.*
- 2. RESPECT AND HONESTY** - *The most important thing is that our organization is upfront and honest about what's going on and keeps staff informed so that we can all feel like we're on board with the heads of the organization – that we're all in unity and we need good communication to feel on board.*
- 3. OPEN AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** - *An organization that is open to feedback and open to employee's comments, input, that's it.*
- 4. DELIVERS ON PROMISES** - *I want to work for an organization that does what it says it is going to.*
- 5. CARING AND COMPASSIONATE** - *I would like to work for an organization that actually really cares about my mental health and that they care about providing opportunities for me to have a really good team to work with so that I feel connected and working really well with my team.*



Penny Soderena

- 6. HEART AND SOUL** - *I want to work for an organization that never loses its heart and soul.*
- 7. CONTINUOUS LEARNING** - *An organization that takes a keen interest in its employees, offers a lot of training, and room for personal growth.*
- 8. CREATIVE AND INSPIRING** - *I want to work for an organization that is innovative and respectful, and supports me as a member of that organization to look for creative ways of doing my job.*
- 9. FUN** - *Let's not take ourselves too seriously. Let's have fun and enjoyment in our work.*

Learning Journal

Each staff member was given a learning journal to keep notes and record "learnings" from the sessions they attended. The journal was also intended to help guide discussions with colleagues after the conference.

Each journal had space for staff to reflect on: 1] their personal observations of the conference; 2] what they would share with their colleagues; and 3] an area they would like to work on.

Networking and Fun

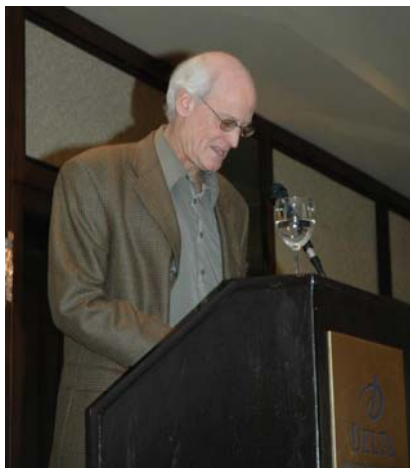
Staff had many opportunities to network and have fun. On the evening of Wednesday, March 1st CLBC's Board of Directors hosted a reception for staff [and community members] to meet and talk with the Board. On Thursday evening, March 2nd a band made up of CLBC staff and a community member from Victoria played at a dance for 160 participants. Staff also had plenty of opportunities during breaks, and at other times during the two days, to renew old acquaintances and meet new people. Below are some images that capture some of the networking and fun.



Closing Plenary

John Lord delivered the closing plenary [summarized below] and began by suggesting that CLBC is involved in a process of launching a new "story" about change for the better, along with a commitment to really make a difference in people's lives. In addition to making a number of presentations during the conference, John's role was to talk informally with staff, and to share his observations of the conference process. Some of John's observations are outlined below.

- ◆ **Questions about the Model** - John identified three parts of the model that he wanted to reinforce because of questions he heard.
 - Separating planning from direct services and the allocation of funds and resources is a critical part of the model because this will free up planning delivered by Facilitators to help people dream about what is possible.
 - Community governance means that CLBC is led by family members, self advocates and community members which can help to create dialogue and places where people can have genuine discussions about what CLBC should be doing to help move ahead in the journey.
 - Individualized funding can help people to achieve better outcomes because it provides them greater control in their lives. Even small amounts of funding can enable people to make decisions about their lives that help build capacity.



John Lord

principles that people can easily understand and work with are needed. In yet other areas, simple and effective processes that can be followed are required. He cautioned people to carefully discern the distinctions between these three things.

- ◆ **Question About Staff Roles** – John acknowledged that while some staff feel uncertainty and strain in their changing roles, there is an opportunity to further define their new practice roles within the parameters and principles that the development site has worked through.
- ◆ **Community as a First Resort** – John observed that a dominant theme is that staff believes more resources are needed to do their job. Yet, he also made the point that while people with developmental disabilities often need new resources; care needs to be taken to not focus on funding as the way to solve problems. John suggested we need to think “*community as a first resort*”; in other words the places and spaces in community where people come together for hospitality and to solve problems.
- ◆ **Build Effective Distinctions Between Policy, Principle and Process** - John stressed that clear policies are needed in certain areas while in other areas

John next focused on some of the key behaviours that will indicate that CLBC is involved in a healthy transformation process.

- ◆ **People Participate Fully** - To have a truly transformed and healthy organization, people need to be able to engage in dialogue, share what they learn and admit mistakes.
- ◆ **The Organization is Principle Driven** - An organization that is principle driven is very different than one that is manager driven. In a principle driven organization, managers delegate and fully engage people in a process to search for answers.
- ◆ **Coherence Between Policy, Principles and Practice** – John commented that the Individual and Family Support Policy is an example of a promising, well-developed policy that needs to ensure that it remains consistent with the principles and practice that people are using to implement this new policy. This is key because this policy is the primary gateway to CLBC funded supports and services.
- ◆ **Transformation in the Organization Stays Grounded in the Lives of People with Disabilities and Families** - CLBC has a chance to do this well, particularly if Facilitators listen deeply and get to know people. The creation of Community Councils across BC is an additional way that CLBC can keep grounded in the lives of individuals and families.
- ◆ **Recognize that Transformation is an Ongoing Process** - Transformation is really an evolution that is always occurring. Regular reviews and evaluation need to be built into how the work is done. Approaching transformation in this way will provide the feedback needed to make the changes that families and individuals are expecting.
- ◆ **The Vision is Clear, the Mission is Understood and Everybody is Working Towards It** – While suggesting that it might sound funny to some, John encouraged people to memorize the vision, and the principles that will guide the way they work because we “. . . almost need to have a mantra to make sure we don't forget . . .”

John concluded his closing keynote remarks by urging people to see transformation as a journey.

And I heard some kind of metaphor about journey the last couple of days. And if you think about it, when we go on a journey, what do we do? We decide where we are going. We decide who we are going with. We are very thoughtful of the steps and the stops along the way. But we also have lots of dialogue and reflection along the way, to make sure that we are comfortable with our bearings. But we also know when we are on a journey, especially on a foreign land that we need to stay mindful

or we'll get lost. So your challenge is to stay mindful and principle centered amidst the turbulence and challenges that will surely come.

You can listen to John's complete keynote address by visiting this [link](#).

Closing Slide Show

The conference ended with a slide show with photographs taken during the two days set to "It's a Beautiful Day" by the Irish rock group U2. We can thank Community Planning and Development Manager Andrew Fidell for this musical suggestion!

While conferences typically feature important speakers and interesting topics, what really makes each conference unique is the contribution of the participants. This year's closing slide show acknowledges the staff and community representatives who attended and their commitment to fully engaging in a dialogue about the key issues facing CLBC as it moves forward.

Next Year's Conference

CLBC's second annual staff conference will be held from April 16-17, 2007 at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond. More details will be provided to staff closer to those dates.

Appendix 1 - Conference Feedback

The conference facilitated knowledge sharing among the participants.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	16.7	20
Very Good	48.3	58
Good	27.5	33
Fair	7.5	9
Poor	0	0

I learned material that will help me better perform my job.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	5.9	7
Very Good	26.1	31
Good	37.8	45
Fair	26.1	31
Poor	4.2	5

I found new contacts and opportunities for future collaboration.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	10	12
Very Good	32.5	39
Good	36.7	44
Fair	18.3	22
Poor	2.5	3

Overall quality of the venue.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	20.8	25
Very Good	46.7	56
Good	22.5	27
Fair	7.5	9
Poor	2.5	3

Overall quality of the speakers.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	23.5	28
Very Good	44.5	53
Good	28.6	34
Fair	3.4	4
Poor	0	0

Overall quality of the conference sessions.

Rating	%	Total
Excellent	13.3	16
Very Good	45.8	55
Good	32.5	39
Fair	7.5	9
Poor	0.8	1