

## **WHERE DOES THE HALL PLAN COME FROM?**

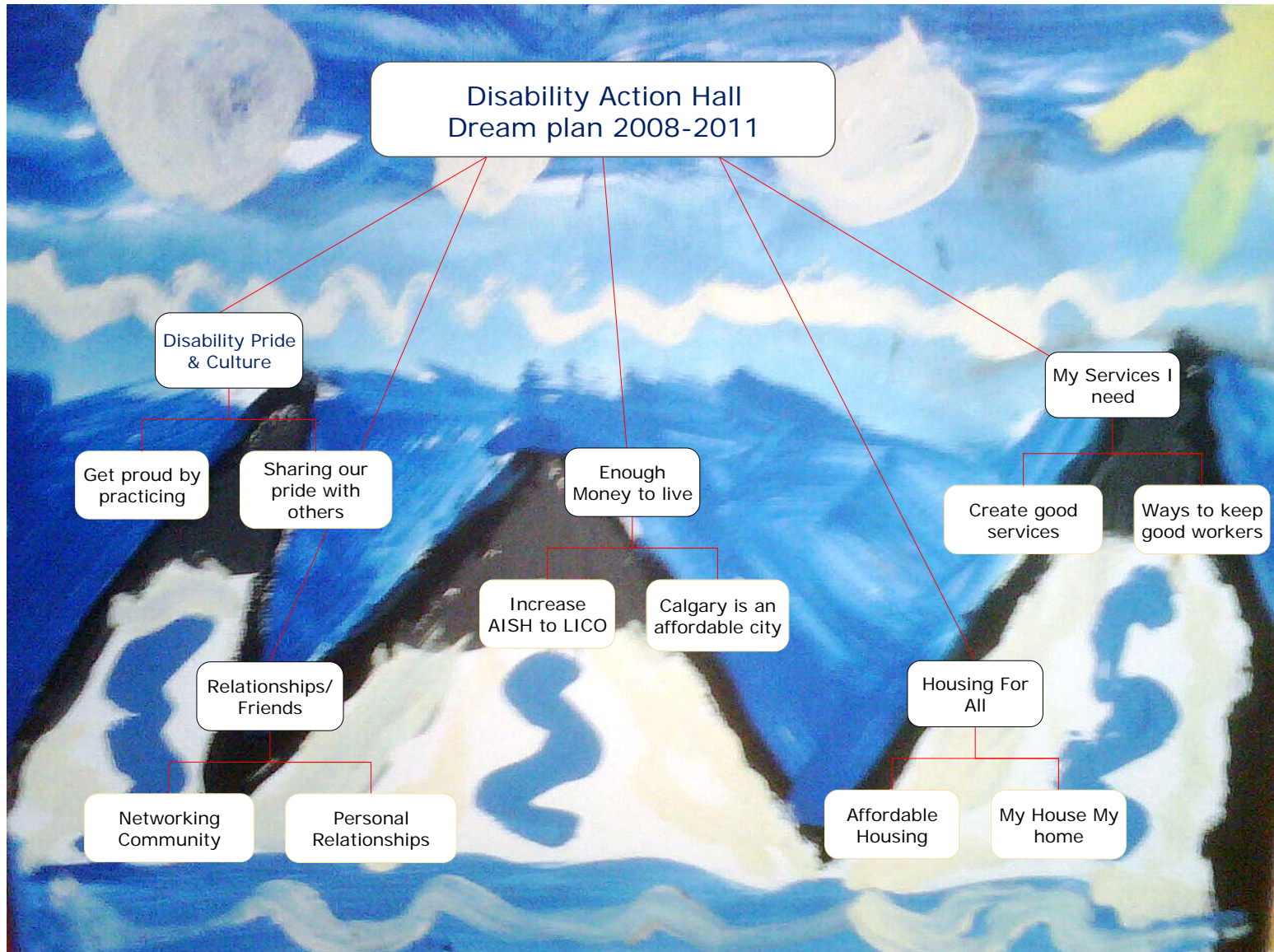
Members of the Disability Action Hall met over a period of several months to talk about what is important to people with developmental disabilities in the Calgary Region. Self-advocates met over the summer of 2008 to have free discussions about the things that were most important in their lives. We did this over a series of meetings. In addition to discussing issues current in people's lives, we also gathered information on the ongoing work from previous projects that had pieces left to complete. We presented all of the areas discussed at a large planning meeting for Hall members. The members choose which areas were of the greatest priority in their lives. While we will continue to monitor all the areas of concern for self-advocates, we agreed to focus on the following priority areas:

Housing, AISH, Relationships, Disability Pride and Culture and the Services we need.

After we identified the areas of utmost concern, we held more discussion on each area about what we need to do to make life better for people with disabilities.

In addition to the priority areas, we also assume ad-hoc possibilities to work to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities in the Calgary area will come along. We work with many community partners on issues affecting the lives of people and we have a number of opportunities to share our expertise with partners as well.

The following pages are the five areas of focus for the Disability Action Hall Action Plan for 2008 -2011 which was last updated on March 26, 2009.



## Area 1: Housing Issues

### 1. Affordable Housing

- a. Develop action plan (include policy issues) around increasing affordable housing
- b. Work with allies to increase affordable housing
  - i.) Get representative on Homeless Action Calgary Committee (HACC) **(completed November 2008)**
  - ii.) HACC working on operations
    - Lloyd and Patricia as Board members
    - Tammy and Murray on working group
  - iii.) Participate in the Calgary Homeless Foundation
    - Hall met with Deb Welliver (Vice President, Prevention, **(completed October 2008)**)
    - Denise Young is a member of the 'Senior's and Special Needs' housing group and the Homelessness prevention group

### 2. My house... my home

- a. Skill development around conflicts in home/housing situations
  - i.) Mediation skills for individuals
    - Invite Calgary Housing to the Disability Action Hall meeting to discuss issues around conflicts with neighbours in social housing **(completed October 2008)**
- b. Develop information materials to document a list of concerns, issues and ideas around 'My house...my home' conversations (continue ongoing work on project to identify what makes good housing, such as supportive roommate or staffed - home situations)
- c. Develop a list of allies having similar issues to those identified in "My house...my home" and invite contacts where appropriate.
  - i.) Met with Rehabilitation Society about 'My house...my home' stories, follow-up meeting to be confirmed **(completed December 2008)**

## Area 2: AISH and enough money to live in Calgary

### 1. Increase AISH to LICO

#### a. Develop information, messaging and policy

- i.) Met with Mary Anne Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community Supports to discuss issues around AISH **(completed September 2008)**
- ii.) Presented at the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre on 'Friends of AISH' campaign **(completed October 2008)**
- iii.) Presented to Mount Royal College students about AISH **(completed November 2008)**

#### b. Develop action plan

#### c. Create and implement public messaging campaign (Friends of AISH campaign)

- i.) Brochure, electronic petition with over 1000 signatures, paper petition and postcard are completed for International Human Rights Day and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Televised on CTV and written about in Calgary Herald **(completed)**
- ii.) Post events on Facebook **(completed)**
- iii.) Discussion about a living income

#### d. Identify and set up working relationships with people we can work with on AISH

- i.) Meet with Calgary MLAs and others relevant to AISH - met with Alana Delong, MLA, Calgary-Bow and Art Johnston, MLA, Calgary-Hays **(completed February 2009)**
- ii.) Explore working with others on AISH
  - met with Savings Circles group at Momentum **(completed March 2009)**
- iii.) Meet with Judy Lloyd, Manager, Delivery Services Calgary Region, AISH about communication around AISH
- iv.) Participate in 'Poverty talks' activities
  - attended 'Poverty talks' community consultation **(completed March 2009)**

### 2. Calgary is an affordable place to live

#### a. Help our city create fair, affordable user fees for services.

- i.) Low-income transit pass permanently funded in transit budget at 75% Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) for 2008-2011 **(completed)**
- ii.) Continue involvement with Fair Fares Calgary
  - Find a way to address age eligibility, single entry and 100% LICO for transit

- b. Monitor the Vibrant Communities Calgary Living Wage Action Team for parallel actions and messaging

### **Area 3: Friends/Relationships**

#### **1. Networking Community**

- a. Environmental scan of existing networks
- b. Network in region and beyond for Self- Advocacy Summit – plan for the region
- c. Network with PDD Board
- d. Bring on new members and partners to the Disability Action Hall
- e. Community Presentations/Education
  - i) Social Justice Symposium **(completed February 2009)**
  - ii.) Social Justice Encounter **(May 1, 2009)**
  - iii.) Mount Royal College Social Workers students **(completed October 2008)**
  - iv.) University of Calgary Social Justice class **(completed January 2009)**
  - v.) Momentum Savings Circles **(completed February 2009)**
  - vi.) Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Cochrane Interagency Meeting **(completed January 2009)**
  - viii.) FCSS Wheatland Interagency Meeting **(completed February 2009)**
  - x.) Calgary Service Providers Council **(completed February 2009)**
  - xi.) Vocational Rehabilitation and Research Institute (VRRRI) Consumer Advisory Board February 2009 **(completed February 2009)**
  - xi.) Present to Bow Corridor **(completed April 2009)**

- i.) Present at Calgary City Council **(completed March 2009)**

- f. Website development to improve networking
- g. Ways to meet people
  - i.) Identify community social gathering spaces on a day-to-day basis.
  - ii.) Explore creating spaces like a drop-in centre
    - Attend arts collaboration with Marion Nykiel and Drop-In Centre for Arts **(completed March 2009)**
- 2. Personal Relationships**
- a. Explore what issues are for Interpersonal Relationships
  - i) Identify issues with family relationships
  - i) Identify issues with peers
  - ii) Create action plan to address issues
- b. Skills and support to build workshops to increase health of group among peers
  - i.) Dating and sexuality
  - ii.) Conflict resolution
  - iii.) Self esteem workshops
  - iv.) Boundaries
  - v.) Health & medical information such as diet or understanding peers disabilities
  - vi.) Schizophrenia Society Workshop **(completed October 2008)**
- c. Have fun
  - i.) Continue to have a social activities to enhance relationships at the Disability Action Hall
    - Retreat with the region
    - Regular outings and/or special guests

## Area 4: My services and supports I need -

### 1. Create good services

- a. Identify what we want to see for services
  - i.) Identify areas of services that are absent/underserved and explore developing those areas
- b. Create a mechanism of feedback on all services to improve quality
  - i.) Meet with PDD about service ideas/inspirations
    - Attend PDD arts vision session to share our plan. **(completed March 2009)**
    - Present to Board **(completed March 2009)**
  - ii.) ACDS conference presentation **(completed April 2009)**
  - iii.) Explore and participate with Satisfaction Surveys
  - iv.) Explore speaking without fear (to PDD, organizations and families)
  - v.) Work on plain language advocacy processes

### c. Service As We See It

- i.) Identify key components and put on website
- ii.) Creating forum/dialogue page
- iii.) Develop ways to identify good services ideas (e.g., a 'Service As We See It' approved thumbs up award')

### 2. Ways to keep good workers

- a. Explore ways to be allies in keeping good workers
- b. Mentorship in advocacy where required.
  - i.) Acts as allies in supporting our caregivers in advocacy efforts
    - Attend Families Who Care Rally October 28<sup>th</sup> **(completed October 2008)**
  - ii.) Participate and consult with allies with common message to keep good workers.

## Area 5: Disability Pride and Culture - Explore and develop disability pride and culture

### 1. Get proud by practicing

- a. Hold art-based workshops to help animate goals using film, visual art, performance, song writing
- b. Public expression, displays and websites
  - i.) Held 'Get in touch with Art' contest December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, over 30 entries **(completed December 2008)**
- c. Encourage people around the region to post ideas and work they are proud of on our website and at events
  - i.) Speak Out to be held on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009
  - ii.) Creating an information booth to have at agency celebrations/job fairs and community events.
    - interview film makers at Picture this...film festival on how to support film making & disability culture at the Disability Action Hall**(completed February 2009)**
  - iii.) Member of International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP) Committee
  - iv.) Participate in the International Day of Disabled Persons on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

### 2. Share our pride with others

- a. Explore and stimulate networks and existing projects/groups
  - i.) Cross disability celebration of Disability Arts & Culture <sup>rd</sup> at Hotel Arts **(completed December 3, 2008)**
  - iii.) Social Justice Symposium **(completed February 2009)**
  - iii.) "It's My History Too" project at Summit
  - iv.) Arusha Centre for Pride Parade
  - v.) Women's Centre (workshops on self-esteem)
  - vi.) Engage Seniors - Attend Monthly Council of Canadians meetings for networking
- b. Regional Planning
  - i.) Set up regional presentations – 10 minutes to 1 hour presentation on the road (for example Speak Out, Summit, short films on pride and culture)
  - ii.) Plan a regional meeting with interested networks
  - iii.) Continue as members of Provincial Self-Advocacy Summit Planning committee
  - iv.) Participate in the Self-Advocacy Summit October 2, 3 and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009
  - v.) Disability Action Hall continues cross-disability networking as an International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP) steering committee for IDDP

## **Other interesting stuff we are working on**

### **Research project on “What is success in social advocacy groups?” appreciative inquiry project with the University of Calgary et al**

For the last two years, we have been involved in a participatory research project defining “What is success?” in social and political action groups. We are one of nine groups across the country that were identified as extremely successful in our work and a research team from the University of Calgary, University of Carleton and other universities is looking at our experiences as a way to define success in advocacy. We recently met with other project participants from across the country and have started the process on writing a book on identifying factors of success.

### **Citizenship and civic engagement**

The Hall has identified for a number of years the importance of full-citizenship for people with disabilities. We have participated on number of groups and discussions on this issue. We now have the potential to continue this work with other groups, such as the United Way, Family Child Social Services, Vibrant Communities Calgary, Arusha, Plan It, etc.

### **Plain language/consent**

We have already identified some issues related in plain language in our core work plan. Plain language is an area that crosses into numerous realms and the Disability Action Hall is continually asked to provide feedback on issues. One of those areas is creating understandable consent forms. Another is creating plain language materials to explain program services, red tape, guardianships, voting, etc. We see this as our ongoing work to provide real access for people with low-literacy skills.

### **Educating community**

The Disability Action Hall is regularly asked to present to university and college classes, schools, community groups and faith organizations. We speak on many topics, such as the lives of people with disabilities, their hopes and dreams for the future, human rights, citizenship engagement, animating activism, pride & culture, etc. We intend to continue this work as we see it as a powerful way to get dialogue with communities about the lives of people with disabilities and to change attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities.

### **Access**

Due to the Disability Action Hall’s reputation in the community, we are regularly asked to provide information on the accessibility and safety of our city for people with disabilities. We see this as an opportunity to educate the community and make our world accessible for people with disabilities. Some recent examples we have be involved in include increasing physical access to downtown places, increasing access to academic work for people with low-literacy, increasing access to virtual information on websites, social networking sites and on-line magazines.