

Section I

Part 1

The Story of the CLS

History of the Community Living Society

The Woodlands Parents Group (1976)

Woodlands was an institution housing mentally and physically handicapped people that operated in the Lower Mainland from 1878 to 1996. The Woodlands Parents Group was formed in 1976 when a number of parents raised their concerns about the quality of the institutionalized life their sons and daughters experienced. Many family members had little access to each other, and few opportunities to make choices, decisions or plans for the future for their loved one. The Woodlands Parents Group was determined to create a standard of living that respected the choices and potential of individuals living in Woodlands.

Through their discussions, the Woodlands Parents Group developed a set of beliefs and values reflecting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which apply to all of us equally. These are the basic values they felt should be fundamental to every organization providing support:

- ❖ Each person is a unique individual having intrinsic worth.
- ❖ Each person has the right to live a life of dignity.
- ❖ Each person must have their personal autonomy honoured at all times, and any support given must empower the individual to make their own decisions.
- ❖ Each person must have the opportunity to live as a full and participating citizen in their own community.

The Community Living Society (1978)

Through the work of the Woodlands Parents Group, the Community Living Society was incorporated under the Societies Act as an autonomous non-profit organization on January 16, 1978. Its original role was as a brokerage agency to help individuals, with their families, to identify the services they would need in the community and to access these services using the dollars they were allocated. However it



**CLS Beliefs and
Values developed
by Families in
1976**

was soon found that adequate services were not available. The CLS therefore expanded to become a residential service provider in 1980 and a vocational service provider in 1982, and is now one of the largest such agencies in the Lower Mainland.

**Family Link Society
of B.C.**



The CLS currently receives funding from government for providing services to those we support. We believe that each supported individual should receive individualized funding tailored to their identified needs leaving them free to buy the required services they desire. This would greatly enhance their self-determination. We pride ourselves in being responsive and flexible, tailoring services to the individuals.

Once most of its family members were out of the institution, the Woodlands Parents Group changed its name to the Community Family Link Society of B.C. (Family Link). Its present role is to provide family-to-family support as well as to act as promoters of the original vision. Today Family Link members make themselves available to the CLS community to help in dealing with, supporting, or nurturing other family members.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of the Community Living Society may be summed up best by our Vision and Mission statements:

Vision— Communities where every person lives with dignity and enjoys a full life.

Mission—The Community Living Society works collaboratively to offer personalized, flexible home and community opportunities, respecting the uniqueness of the person with a disability, families and networks.

**Basic rights that we
all expect**



Since 1982, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has guaranteed equal rights to every Canadian. The Community Living Society believes that, to ensure access to the full benefits of this citizenship, adequately funded public resources must be available to each individual with disabilities to enable their right to self-determination. We believe that:

All individuals are best served in normal family-type homes in their own communities, accessing the range of opportunities and experiences available to everyone.

All planning and services must focus on the specific requirements of each individual and their network, to foster their

independence, choice and skills. The individual with their network has the veto in services and placement planning.

All individuals must have the opportunity to choose family members and others to support them in making decisions, to ensure that their choices in planning and provision of services are honoured. The individual must have full access to their chosen network.

All support systems should be open and accountable to the individual and personal network. In addition to our internal processes there are several types of external monitoring processes to assist with this work: fiscal monitoring by government ministries; health and safety standards set by government and accrediting agencies; quality of life, primarily monitored by the individual and network.

Our Goals for the Individuals

The Community Living Society seeks to realize a set of broad goals in supporting each of our individuals, regardless of the nature or degree of disability, age, sex, race, religion, social or economic backgrounds, or previous developmental opportunities or demonstrated abilities.

To promote the individual's sense of their own dignity and autonomy, we must:

Relate to each individual at all times in a way that shows we respect and value them.

Provide each individual with the living arrangement and opportunities that enable them to choose as full a life in the community as is realistically possible.

Assist each individual to foster their own self-knowledge, self-determination, appropriate behaviour, natural abilities and interests.

Help each individual to recognize the full range of options open to them, to look at various alternatives, to anticipate consequences, to make decisions and determine goals accordingly.

Help each individual to develop self-confidence, assertiveness, and to follow through on personal decisions and goals they have made.

To support each individual's need for both relationships and privacy, we must:

Facilitate with respect and care, each individual's relationship with their natural family members, except in those rare cases where the individual clearly wishes otherwise.

Help each individual to develop the skills to acquire and sustain a network of mature relationships with people other than paid staff, from close personal friends to ordinary social acquaintances.

Personally commit to build a caring personal relationship with each supported individual.

Create a climate of trust in the home and elsewhere that encourages the individual and family to openly express concerns and relationship needs.

Allow each individual to strike their own personal balance between social activities and solitude, while still encouraging enough socialization for a full life.

Provide a variety of activities, events, company and places to visit.

Ensure each individual's skills and aptitudes are maintained and developed.

Assist each individual, with respect, to overcome certain behaviours that may appear inappropriate and affect the individual's achievement of a full life in the community.

Assist each individual to deal in a positive manner with their vulnerabilities and areas of personal need.

Encourage each individual's identification and expression of their own physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social needs.

Establish a climate of opportunity and trust in which each individual can develop their unique gifts, and can share these with housemates, friends, family and their community.

Encourage each individual to improve their abilities to communicate with a variety of people for a range of purposes.

To enhance the individual's sense of responsibility, we must:

Assist each individual to grasp the ways in which the acting out of various emotions and drives can both positively and negatively

affect how one is regarded by others, and how one regards oneself.

Help each individual to identify the ways in which their daily behaviours help evoke and shape the responses of other people, and to act in this light.

Support each individual to identify and respond appropriately to the needs and rights of other people.

To ensure the health and safety of each individual, we must:

Help each individual to live in as full a personal state of physical, mental, spiritual and social well being as is possible.

Assist each individual to understand the consequences of their actions and the possible implications for their safety and well being.

Use appropriate means necessary to ensure each individual's safety needs are met on an ongoing basis.

Use appropriate, reasonable means necessary to ensure the development and continuation of each individual's inner sense of security.

How We See Ourselves Today

We realize our goals are a tall order, best worked out over time through experience. One thing that may help you is to remember that we are not just the Community Living Society. We are the community. You, the individuals we support, the next door neighbour, the Coordinators, the waitress at the coffee shop, CLS office personnel, the sky-train worker, your fellow community living counsellors, and everyone else. Everyone together makes up our community and when we talk about integrating the community our goal is to make it whole in the only healthy way possible; by including everyone and discriminating against no one.

We revisit our Values keeping in mind the work of the families. Today, we espouse the following values:

Values

We honour our past as we create the future.

We nurture hopes and dreams.

We promote a sense of purpose and belonging for everyone.

We respect and appreciate each person for who they are and the choices they make.



We create an environment of trust and commitment through listening and valuing individual contributions.

We are progressive and grow through our creativity, innovation and continuous learning.

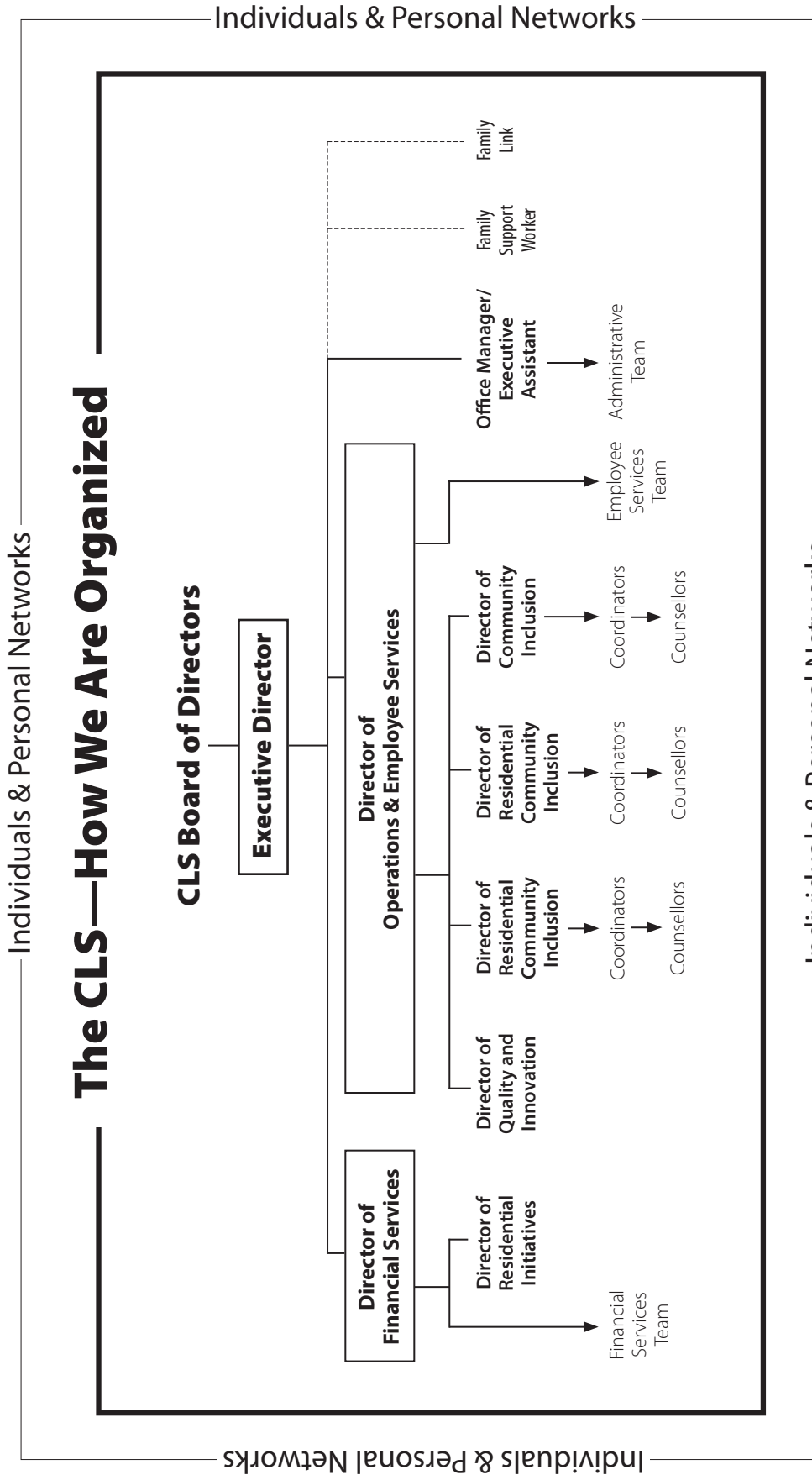
We believe that healthy relationships are essential for our collective success.

We have the courage to take risks and challenge ourselves and each other.

We hold ourselves to the highest standards and are openly accountable for our actions.

We celebrate and have fun!

Inside, you will find a lot of information that is as much about your rights as it is about your responsibilities as an individual, a family member and as an employee. Welcome to a great opportunity. The opportunity to thrive in your community together.



We want everyone to be free to learn, grow and to make changes where you are, whatever your job or role in our organization. You have the opportunity to bring new insight to your everyday activities, your team or your family member and the whole CLS.

If you want to find out a little more about what we all do at the CLS, general position descriptions are provided in Appendix C: Our Various Roles at the CLS.