

# PLN Journey



Summer 2006

## Volunteer Awards



- On April 21, 2006, at the Concordia Club in Kitchener, the Ontario Government honoured 295 volunteers for making a difference in the lives of others. Three of our Board members received a stylized trillium pin and a personalized certificate for five years of continuous service to Planned Lifetime Networks (WVO). From left to right: Verlyn Rowett, Lynne Haven and Roz Haven. Congratulations, ladies!

## A Good Life Meetings

### "A Good Life"

Remember this book? You received a copy when you joined PLN. Dig it up, read chapter 1 and join us for our next monthly gathering on Wednesday, June 7th, 7:00 p.m. at 54 Euclid Ave., Waterloo. If time allows, prepare questions beforehand, suggestions or just come and hear how we can benefit from information and guidelines in this book. Our monthly get-togethers are great opportunities for all PLN members to connect, catch up and share. If you have any questions or need directions please call 886-2033. Thank you. Looking forward to seeing you June 7th - Good Life gathering.

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## Planned Lifetime Networks Annual General Meeting

All are welcome to attend the 2006 Annual General Meeting

Date: June 17th

Time: 11:00am to 2:00 pm

Location: 35 Old Carriage Drive Kitchener

It will be a Potluck so please call to confirm our attendance 886-2033

## Board Member Retirees

Two very dedicated Board Members, Roz Vincent-Haven and Verlyn Rowett will be retiring from the Board next month and PLN wanted to honour them by providing them with a forum.

In the Beginning...

by Roz Vincent-Haven

In the beginning the organization which has become Planned Lifetime Networks of the Waterloo Region was only a dream, a possibility.

You see in the spring of 1999 I had the opportunity to accompany my daughter Beth, then 19 to the Canadian Down Syndrome Society Conference in Victoria BC. There I had the fortuitous experience of attending a workshop led by Al Etmanski, then the Executive Director of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) BC. As Al spoke about the people of PLAN and showed pictures of networks of friends planning and playing together, I started to form a vision of such an organization at home in Waterloo. I dreamt of a group dedicated to establishing and monitoring networks of support for people

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like Beth, isolated due to disability, for their lifetime. Networks would be formed and maintained by paid community connectors, like PLAN BC. And like the parents who began PLAN, even if I was no longer there or able to support the network, the organization would ensure Beth continued to have a good life with friendships, security and purpose.

Ted Kuntz, then vice-president of PLAN said he was coming to visit family in our area in June. If we could bring a group of folks together he would come and talk to us about starting an affiliate organization. We spread the word, far and wide, with the help of local agencies and the two school boards. On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000, 51 family and community members came together to listen and discuss possibilities. By the end of the evening a steering committee had been established. Several members of that group are still actively involved on the Board of Planned Lifetime Networks (PLN) and four families who agreed to participate on the steering committee shortly afterward became the first Lifetime Members.

The amazing Elizabeth Bloomfield did the necessary work to have the organization incorporated as a not for profit organization by the following September. I was named the first president of PLN, an office that I feel privileged to have held. In August, 2001 PLN was granted charitable status, retroactive to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2001, thanks again to Elizabeth. She has gone on to other work in her home town of Guelph but continues to be a strong supporter of Planned Lifetime Networks.

In the spring of 2001, the first network was started. It was formed around Beth as kind of a demonstration project so we could have at least one story of our own to tell. At first, we didn't have a community connector for the network but soon Sharon Lavoie agreed to be our first connector and shortly after another network began. I am thrilled to say that Beth's network is still going strong five years later. Some members have changed but there are still a core of friends willing to support Beth for the long haul.

As for me, after six years of dreaming, planning and working with many other dedicated folks, I'm ready for a break. Together we changed PLN from a vision to a reality. We have made a start and I know we, as an organization dedicated to reality that it is really relationships that keep people safe, will continue and flourish. Yes we are still on the way and have a long way to go to ensure that PLN becomes sustainable for our loved ones and those who we haven't even met yet. But we have made a great beginning in the last five years. Others have and will continue to join us. Others who are dreamers too. I will still be there in the wings, helping out on committees and where I can.

I am so very grateful to the relationships I have formed and the friends I have met along the way. The board of PLN remains a very active and dedicated group of people. We have had many bumps along the road and there will be more in the future. I am proud to be one among many who have worked so hard and believed so much in what we might accomplish together. A grateful thank you to Marnie Matthews, Arlene Smith, Monica Landoni, Lise Szabo, Jane Brennehan, Verlyn Rowett and my spouse Lynne Thomson-Haven. We have all been partners on the journey.

I believe that Planned Lifetime Networks of the Waterloo Region will grow to become the beacon of life in community that I first saw that day at a workshop in Victoria. Thank you all for allowing me to be a part of its beginning.

With love and blessings,  
Roz

### **Verlyn Rowett – Board of Director**

I was one of the first people to hear Ted Kuntz speak in June 2000 about PLAN BC. I signed my name to the list for a steering committee to investigate the possibility of our own Planned Lifetime Group. I have participated in all aspects of the organization since then. I was fortunate to go to BC to a leadership training session in 2001. It has been a privilege to work on developing the organization to this point. The last six years have been a great time to learn and grow with all the members of the Board. I will continue on the Community Awareness Committee after I leave the Board. It is essential that our name is known by community members, corporations and families. We need to grow together in community.

The Board of Directors of PLN is a working Board, meaning that all the necessary work of not only overseeing but running the organization is done by the Board and volunteers on various committees. Currently the committee structure is as follows:  
 Membership and Parent Involvement Committee –Chair: Arlene Smith  
 Community Awareness Committee– Chair: Verlyn Rowett  
 Fund Raising Committee – Chair: Lise Szabo  
 Network Committee – Chair: Marnie Matthews

The other position that the organization has is Coordinator of Networks currently being done on a volunteer basis by Marnie Matthews. We are planning to hire a person to do this job by August 2006. We have received a grant from the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation for half the salary for a year for this position (\$8,680). This grant is deeply appreciated to help better serve the focus people and families of our organization. Communities are strengthened by the networks and by active participation of the focus people in the life of the community.

Recently the Board has approved the “Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code” of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy as recommended by the Fundraising Committee. It holds us to the highest standard of honesty, clarity and transparency in our financial dealings. This commitment on our part will help us in our fundraising efforts.

The Network Committee has been working on finding Community Connectors for all seven networks. The advertising, interviewing and training are ongoing. We have been successful in finding 2 new Connectors recently and are searching for 2 more in the Cambridge area. We have also been doing the Future Planning Consultations for all the members. We hope to have them completed by the beginning of June.

The Community Awareness Committee has been working hard on putting on a great series of workshops and the day long family forum, “Create the New Story Together”.

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## Workshop Highlights

Saturday, April 22, 2006 – Wills, Estate Planning, Henson Trust and more. Peter Brennan a local lawyer from Amy, Appleby and Brennan, shared his knowledge about Wills, Estate Planning and Henson Trusts. He has many years of experience working with families with children with disabilities. He used a resource from Graeme Treeby – Resolving the Mystery. PLN WWO has acquired a number of these resources for sale. They are available for \$35.00 Contact PLN We will have another workshop in the fall.

Saturday, April 29, 2006 – Relationships and Network Building. Marnie Matthews spoke to the participants about how important relationships are for all of us. We used a tool to help us see visually how those relationships change when we develop a network around the focus person.

### Spring Workshop Series # 3- “The Joy of Stress”

PLNWWO was very fortunate to have Ted Kuntz, author of “Peace Begins With Me” as the presenter on May 6, 2006. Ted spoke of the darkest period of his life- after his son sustained an Acquired Brain Injury following a vaccination and a resultant uncontrolled seizure disorder. As a Family Psychotherapist in Vancouver, Ted could help others, but it was a life-transforming encounter, with his son as his teacher, that led Ted to begin a journey of inquiry which propelled him towards wholeness and to garnering the wisdom and clarity he now shares with others.

There is much I could share about Ted's nuggets of wisdom, but I would like to talk about the 2 pieces of information that spoke to me at this stage of my life's journey- one of transition for my daughter and me.

*Be a duck, not a sponge-* let things roll off your back so you don't soak up all the negativity that surrounds you. Accept that “it is” and don't resist reality. An example of this is: “It shouldn't be this way” or “The accident should never have happened.” Resisting reality makes us feel sad, angry, resentful and frustrated. It feeds negativity. Breathe from your diaphragm, center yourself and choose “positivity”!

Spend more time on your “*to be*” list” than your “*to do*” list. How often are we caught up in never ending tasks and activities and lose our dreams and hopes? The power of visualization, in creating your reality, is a tool to take charge and “be”. Change “I'll believe it when I see it” to “I'll see it when I believe it”. Wonderful things can happen. And it may surprise you to find that you won't be struggling quite so hard *doing* but enjoying *being* more- in peace, love, joy and hope.

“Peace Begins With Me” is a simple book, packed full of wisdom and inspiration. It speaks with the voice of the heart and soul. It is written in a style that is concise, clear and condensed. And it is practical. Have you ever had the experience of picking up a self-help book and being able to pick out everyone's flaws but your own? This is not one of them. It speaks directly to the human condition which we all struggle with. If you would like a copy of Ted's book, please email your request to [plnwwo@sympatico.ca](mailto:plnwwo@sympatico.ca) or call 746-1188.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ONTARIO LAW FOUNDATION FOR THEIR GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR FREE WORKSHOP SERIES

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## Planned Lifetime Networks

PLN was incorporated in 2000 by families who strongly believed in the four core values of:

**Family Leadership** (families are experts, PLN is accountable to families)

**Safety and Security Through Relationships** (the number and quality of relationships is directly related to a safe and secure future PLN facilitates development of relationships between individuals with a disability and their community. Mutual friendship not charity!),

**Self Sufficiency** (independence from government funding for our operational expenses makes us effective and accountable),

**Contribution** (every person with a disability has gifts to share and important contributions to make to their community. All are full citizens)

We are not disability specific although most individuals have an intellectual disability of some sort or another, often combined with a mental illness or physical disability.

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## PLN has the following resources for sale:

**A Good Life**, written by Al Etmanski, is an instructional guide primarily for families, friends and caregivers of people with disabilities. It offers a step by step guide to help create a plan for the future which provides for the safety, security and well being of people with disabilities. It leads the reader to look beyond professional services and programs in planning for the future and focuses on what is needed to create a good life. We think this book is so good that PLN gives it to people when they become associate supporters the first time. It is also excellent as a gift for anyone else in your extended family who needs more information. \$40.00

**The Peace of Mind CD-ROM** is a practical and loving guide to help plan for the future of your relative with a disability. It combines personal stories, video clips, testimonials, tips and step by step worksheets to get you started on your way to peace of mind. \$25.00

**The Company of Others**, a creative collaboration by author Sandra Shields and photographer David Campion, uniquely captures the spirit and significance of personal networks. Compelling stories and photographs lead the reader into an intimate journey into the lives of five individuals – with no connection to each other and little in common, except in one respect: each person is at the centre of a unique personal network. \$25.00

**In Peace Begins With Me** Ted Kuntz shares a powerful story of his journey through darkness to a life of peace, joy and happiness. His story reminds us of profound truths that have been taught for centuries. At the core of his message are simple and powerful strategies to enable us to experience more peace and more joy. Ted changes the way we view ourselves and our world. He offers tools and strategies to create a life more of our choosing. You can't help but be inspired and changed by this book. \$25.00

**Removing the Mystery** – *An Estate Planning Guide for Families of People With Disabilities* does just that. Graeme Treeby, an accountant as well as a parent, has written this comprehensive manual to assist parents in planning to provide the financial resources required to carry out the goals, dreams and visions that should be developed as part of the Life Plan of a person with a disability. The information, in remarkably plain language, addresses issues that relate directly to providing for our children with disabilities. \$35.00

All these resources are available from Planned Lifetime Networks. Shipping and handling charges are additional. To avoid mailing charges please call PLN at 519-746-1188 or email [plnww@sympatico.ca](mailto:plnww@sympatico.ca) to arrange to pick

## Please Make Note:

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) has produced a paper on the evolution of the way it supports people with developmental disabilities. It is called Opportunities and Action. A transformation of this system of supports should reflect present day needs. Go to the Ministry website at: [www.mcsc.gov.on/NR/MCFCS/developmental/DSreport\\_EN.pdf](http://www.mcsc.gov.on/NR/MCFCS/developmental/DSreport_EN.pdf). This document is 53 pages long. Read those areas that are of interest to you and try to answer the Key Questions on page 40-47. Send them in before June 15, 2006. The more responses the Ministry receives from parents and focus people, the more powerful the message. This is our future and we will live with the consequences of this transformation. There are community consultations being held in several cities around the province. The participants are being invited by the Ministry. A couple of Board members from PLN WWO have been invited. They will share their perspectives at the meeting and will report on what happens in the next newsletter.

