

# DISABILITY ADVOCACY NETWORK OF EASTERN ONTARIO/ RÉSEAU D'ACTION POUR L'INCLUSION DES PERSONNES HANDICAPPÉES DE L'EST ONTARIEN

**DANEO/RAIPHEO**

**NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2019**

## DANEO's Housing Sub-Committee is Working in our Community

At our Annual General Meeting in May 2019, we “stood up” a Housing Sub-Committee. Access to accommodation for individuals with disabilities is challenging, even within the discussions around affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing is a key issue for all levels of government. The rate of homelessness is alarming and the insufficient number of units available to individuals who apply for below market rent or rent geared to income result in up to 10 year waits.

DANEO's Housing Sub-Committee is looking at strategic partnerships and has focused on bringing a strong voice representing the needs of people with disabilities and their families and allies to any table where housing needs and plans are being discussed. Gisèle Doyle, chair of the sub-committee, has been busy connecting with city planners, allies and organizations around the city. Gisèle and the Sub-Committee, along with key partners, provided input to the City's 10 year Homelessness Plan last summer, lobbied the city for affordable housing, which resulted in affordable housing component of Budget 2020 which included an extra 15M\$ for affordable housing.

DANEO has had on-going representation with key partnerships, that include:

[Ottawa Disability Coalition](#): This organization focuses on housing and accessibility services, to ensure that the concerns of individuals with challenges are heard.

Voices and Choices: This is a group of individuals with physical challenges and their families who are examining alternative agency-based options for supported independent living.

Orléans-Cumberland Housing Coalition - is a group of east-end non-profit housing and service organizations, who are exploring the housing landscape in order to increase access to affordable units in the east end.

[Healthy Transportation Coalition](#) - is a group of Ottawa residents that are concerned about transportation issues, including affordable transportation, housing close to transportation, Para Transpo.

**CCOC/CAH DCO:** [Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation](#) (CCOC) is a community-based, tenant and member directed, non-profit housing organization whose mission is to create, maintain and promote housing for low and moderate income people.

**Centretown Affordable Housing Development Corporation** (CAHDCO) is CCOC's development corporation, established in 1996 to provide development consulting to non-profit organizations.

We appreciate the work that Martha Beach, DSO Housing Navigator, has done to bring information and ideas to DANEO facilities on housing options. Check out their [Toolkit](#). We still have a lot to learn, particularly in the area of supportive affordable housing. If you would like to join the DANEO's Housing Sub-Committee please drop us a line.

We are planning to resurrect our Facebook page to send you up-to-date information. We ask that you follow us, and that you let us know if there is anything that you may be involved in that is related to inclusive affordable housing and services. Stay tuned!

## Alternative Home Ownership Options - Ideas

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has recently published a guide to life lease ownership options, as part of its [exploration into different options to home ownership and security](#).

The [Guide](#) defines life leases, and give some examples of how individuals, mainly older people, have used this form of housing security.

## Pathways to Inclusive Housing – CACL Resource

The Canadian Association for Community Living under their [My Home My Community](#) initiative documents affordable housing challenges and successes

across the country. Their research provides input to National Housing Strategy, and provides a way to share information so that individuals with challenges and their families can point to and hopefully reuse some of the “pathways” in their own struggles to find secure and supportive community living.

## Need for Reform to Service Provider System

The two primary sources of funded support to individuals with disabilities are The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for individuals with developmental/intellectual challenges, and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for individuals with physical disabilities.

Both these Ministries provide the bulk of support via Transfer Payment Agencies (TPAs) and Healthcare Service Providers (HSP), which operate through Service Agreements which allow them to suspend support to an individual. Where the service is provided in a setting that is owned and managed by the agency, this means that the individual not only loses the support, they could lose their home.

Cost of running the agency system is one of the barriers to increasing the number of individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities receiving supports and services. Because TPAs and HSPs are considered public sector organizations, annual salaries above a certain amount, are reported on the [Ontario Sunshine List](#). DANEO members are concerned that TPAs are appearing on this list, which represents salaries over \$100K per year, and indicates that some of the annual increases are over 5%.

With many individuals and their families struggling to pay for services and supports, and the government looking at limiting annual increases for public sector employees, we need to look at other options, such as direct funding for individuals or capping salaries, to ensure the system is equitable and fair.

There is an initiative underway in the developmental services sector – the **MovingON Strategy** - to look at some of the issues and challenges, and to propose next steps in transformation. We do not have a lot of information about this initiative, except that it is headed by the Provincial Network on Developmental Services. **We are trying to find out whether family networks will be part of this exercise, and whether they will examine some of the issues facing individuals in both support “silos”, as there are many overlapping concerns.**

## About ODSP – Access to Benefits When You Work

One of the concerns about moving into paid work for people receiving ODSP is loss of access to medical and dental benefits that come with income supports. I still have to do some research, but in talking with some parents, and reading the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services information bulletin: [ODSP and Work](#) there might be some situations where this is not the case.

## Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and People First 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference – Focusing on Poverty

Overall the news was not good coming out of this conference. Entitled WHY AM I POOR? - some of the presentations focused on efforts by agencies to help people with disabilities find paid work.

But evidence – both statistical and real life stories – indicate that people with intellectual challenges are more likely to live in poverty, have a difficult time finding and keeping work that pays a living wage, and the tools and rules in place to secure their financial future are complex and difficult to navigate.

Other sessions dealt with the other key cause of poverty among individuals with disabilities – income security. Policy makers as well as individuals spoke of the challenges of applying for things like the Disability Tax Credit, which is a prerequisite requirement for setting up a Registered Disability Savings Plan.

A summary of the day, plus copies of the powerpoint presentations are available on CACL's website: [10<sup>th</sup> Annual Policy Forum on Inclusion](#)

CACL represents many local associations for community living across the country. The community living movement started with families and continues to have a strong voice on rights advocacy and policy.

CACL's Family Voices Task Group has produced a [Family Lens Toolkit](#) which indicates that

Families are highly engaged because they have the greater responsibility for the well being of their family members. It is recognized that families hold a natural authority when they are

acting in the interest of their family members.

We are encouraged by this statement, which indicates that, in their work, organizing and decision-making, agencies and government organizations focusing on inclusion need to include families and family members.

DANEO is working to ensure that the voices of individuals and their families are included in regional and local initiatives, actions, policies and processes that touch their lives. As wait-lists grow, we must encourage additional ways to support citizens with disabilities to have good lives in community.

A lot will be happening in 2020 – hope to see you soon.

The DANEO/RAIPHEO Team!