



Diversity in Growth

Annual Report | 2018 - 2019



Leadership Message

Diversity in Growth

"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day."

— Author Unknown

A cherished by-product of the period of growth that we have experienced at Visions of Independence over the last few years is the explosion in diversity that we enjoy. We see this in the people who are part of our VOI community, in the things that we do, the places we are, the families that we come from, and especially in our various strengths, abilities, and knowledge.

In this past year, we have welcomed new people into our community. The people who live and work in the two homes in Carman have been officially part of VOI for the entire year, as have several people in Winnipeg who were previously within other organizations. Much like the people in St. Claude, and Quest (Portage la Prairie) before them, the people in Carman have provided us with new personalities, new experiences, new perspectives and opportunities for all of us to learn and grow.

Growth and diversity do not come without challenges. The most obvious challenge is the size and shape of our geographical footprint. With Carman, Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg creating a triangle of locations about an hour apart from each point, we needed to work to ensure that we increase our connectivity with each other, despite the distance. To this end, we have on the one hand increased our ability to use technology to bridge the gap, while on the other hand increased our willingness to travel, recognizing the importance of face to face contact. We have changed the patterns of how we gather, blending people from different locations so that we can work toward a cohesive community and reap the benefits of our various uniqueness's.

In order to be better equipped to handle the demands that come with a larger organization, we have examined and redefined our organizational structure. We did this with an emphasis on being better equipped to provide focussed training and support for both staff and managers. We have already covered some critical topics with all staff including; valuing language, our new mission statement and core values, ten agreements of a happy team, ADSPM information, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, respectful workplaces and mutual expectations, and the meaning and importance of advocacy.

Technology knowledge is also quite varied within the organization, and we have taken steps to increase skills and comfort with technology, and use it more effectively not only for data collection and scheduling but increasingly for effective and fast communication.

An additional challenge is sharing with new members our organizational values and culture while learning from them their own culture and characteristics. As you have read within this report, not only do we welcome, but we have felt welcomed by the people of Carman.

At VOI, we know that a balanced group is diverse. This happens in the forms of gender, age, experience, ethnicity, beliefs, skills, and interests. We embrace all, and seek to be balanced in this way whether in a team of people working together, living together, having fun together or in the entire group of VOI!

Finally, we acknowledge and are thankful for the diversity provided by all of the stakeholders not mentioned above – volunteers, families, funders, business partners, neighbours, friends and the Board of Directors. Thank you all for the part you play in Visions of Independence.



Jennifer Hagedorn, Executive Director



Meghan Ross, President

"Diversity: the art of thinking independently together."

— Malcolm Forbes

At a Glance

Mission Statement

VOI provides personalized opportunities for people with diverse abilities to thrive

Core Values

We are open and respectful

We are transparent

We value people's strengths, abilities, and knowledge

We think outside the box

We value people's experiences and perspective

Communities Served

Carman, Elm Creek, Portage la Prairie, St. Claude, and Winnipeg

Types of services offered

Residential, Day Program, Employment, Respite, and Supported Independent Living

Number of people supported 81

Number of employees 280

Number of volunteer hours day program participants contributed to their community 5368.8

The People We Support

Katherine's Story



Katherine was involved with VOI long before she graduated. Her grandmother, Elsie, worked in the first home of VOI in Portage la Prairie in 2003.

Katherine's VOI journey began the summer of 2016 after she graduated from Portage Collegiate Institute. From the beginning, Katherine showed a lot of interest and ambition towards her employment goals.

She has volunteered at many locations in our community, including La Verendrye School and École Arthur Meighan School Canteens, The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #65, and Great Canadian Dollar Store. As time went on, she branched into paid work placements, such as the Portage Golf Course, Portage Curling Club, Splash Island Canteen, Sawmill, and Hidden Talents. These places became the stepping stones as she expanded her skills in cleaning, retail, customer service, and food services. This led her to not only receive one – but two part-time jobs in the community: A&W and Great Canadian Dollar Store. Her hard work and determination over the years have led her to these incredible opportunities.

Katherine – YOU made this happen, and we are so proud to watch you achieve your goals and dreams. You are truly a cherished part of the VOI team. We cannot wait to see you continue to grow as we will be right there cheering you on!

- Written by: Grayson, Direct Support Professional

97% of people we support are happy with the types of activities they are offered

Deeanna



Ivan



Deeanna enjoying a meal from a new recipe. Ivan outside for a walk in his neighbourhood.

Matthew



Matthew and crew collected 864 boxes from local businesses for hampers through VOI's partnership with the Carman & District Christmas Cheer Board. Way to go, Matthew!

Wayne's New Community



Wayne first moved into the Ambassador home from St. Amant. Wayne took things in stride and with staff by his side, you'd be hard-pressed now to find him without a grin! He loves teasing and cracking jokes with his housemates through his communication device. He enjoys their company and that of staff as well.

Wayne often enjoys participating in household activities. He also enjoys going out for haircuts, attending day program, and watching hockey games.

Wayne has truly embraced becoming a more active member of the community!



- Adapted from: Adrienne, Facility Manager

96% of people we support are happy with the services we provide

"We have a wonderful man working with our son who is committed to helping him succeed, and it has made such a difference in his comfort level and feeling safe while at day program."

— Family feedback

A New Home

In keeping with VOI's vision of truly accessible housing for everyone, on March 27, 2019 Paula, Ruby and Shirley moved to VOI's newly acquired home. The move was very smooth, and the ladies settled in quickly. We had an open house and friends came and had a lovely visit.



The house was refurbished to be wheelchair-friendly with widened doorways, a wheelchair ramp, and a built-in sprinkler system for safety. It is a beautiful home; each bedroom has a colour specific to the person's preferences. There is an accessible washroom with a timed heat lamp and ceiling lift capabilities to the bedroom across the hall. The living room, dining area, and kitchen are all open-concept with an island acting as an area separator.

The house has a ramp with a deck in the back, a lovely backyard with a rose garden and raspberry patch. We look forward to seeing what other flowers will soon be popping up and developing the gardens over time.



The neighbourhood is quiet and pleasant. We have met our neighbours on both sides and to the rear of the house, and each seems happy to have us there. We have already had offers to help with the gardens if needed and have had a few chats over the fence. We are looking forward to many more years there!

- Adapted from: Jani, Facility Manager

Jo-Ann and Lillian Travel the World



On April 7, 2018 Jo-Ann and Lillian, retired and semi-retired respectively, flew to Fort Lauderdale, excited to embark the beautiful Regal Princess Cruise ship and start their Western Caribbean Cruise adventure!

They enjoyed the wonderful food, entertainment, yummy

mocktails, and let's not forget-- all the delicious desserts too! The first stop was in the Bahamas at the Princess Cays resort. A relaxing day of soaking up the sun and swimming in the ocean was in store.

Jo-Ann and Lillian kept busy at sea the next day with what the ship had to offer before it arrived at its next destination: Falmouth, Jamaica. They were excited to explore the area and taste some fresh coconut water. What a perfect drink on a hot day!

They then arrived in Grand Cayman Island. What we thought would be a tender boat ride to shore turned out to be a lot more adventurous! This didn't faze Lillian or Jo-Ann, but it sure made the staff feel a little queasy.



97% of people we support are happy with the support provided by staff

The final destination was Cozumel, Mexico. Lillian and Jo-Ann enjoyed the views at the port and finished the night off with a cocktail at one of the nearby restaurants. We knew our trip was soon coming to an end, but that wasn't about to slow Jo-Ann and Lillian. During the evenings, they relished the many different amazing musical performances held around the ship, as well as the movies under the stars. This was such a perfect trip for Jo-Ann and Lillian, filled with many first experiences that will bring fond memories for years to come.

- Adapted from: Nathalie, Facility Manager

What We Heard from the People We Support

89% of people we support are happy with the number of activities they are offered

86% of people we support are happy with the skills they have learned

79% of people we support are happy with the number of staff

79% of people we support are happy with challenges they are offered

Of those applicable, 94% of people we support are happy with the volunteer placements offered to them

Of those applicable, 94% of people we support are happy with the work placements offered to them

Our VOI Family Continues to Grow!

From an Island to the VOI-land, A Journey

The journey of Rainbow Residence moving from a small community to joining the broader community that is VOI began several years ago. The Board of Directors needed to explore options for continued service delivery in their community. Terra was part of the board that came together to create a vision for Rainbow Residence. That vision quickly came to include VOI, from initial support to contracted management to final amalgamation in 2018.

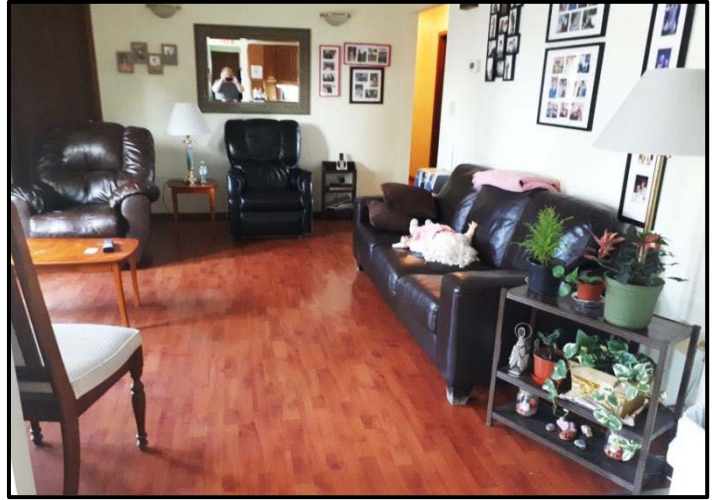


Terra has a unique view of the journey. She worked with Rainbow straight out of high school. She continued to work while attending Red River College full-time, and in 1993 she started managing Rainbow which was then just one home. In 1997, she switched gears and stepped away from Rainbow and went to work in the school system. Later, an opportunity arose for Terra to sit on the board, which led to the feeling that she needed to again contribute to Rainbow. Nearly 19 years after leaving, Terra came back to Rainbow as the General Manager.

Being involved with the transition to becoming part of VOI, Terra has reflected on some of what has changed, and what has stayed the same.

With her many years in the Carman community, along with her work at the school division, Terra brings a wide range of connections. She also has an awareness of what students and people from the community may need from services that VOI can provide. She is excited that the people in Carman were able to stay in their homes and continue to be supported by many of the same staff while becoming part of a much larger network. This allows supports and new connections for everyone.

Personally, Terra saw her role expand to a Director of Services. In her new position, Terra feels she now benefits from the support of VOI's administrative departments. Terra is excited to share these opportunities of professional growth with the facility managers that she supports. She is incredibly thankful for the staff that work in the two houses in Carman and she feels good about being able to leave work at the end of the day. There is even one staff member that Terra hired during her first period of employment with Rainbow in 1995 that still works as a full-time DSP!



As things have come full circle for Terra, the rainbow returns. It would seem this was where she was meant to be. Alongside her, now under VOI's umbrella, all the people of the Rainbow community have found a team of great support.

Our Dedicated Staff

One of Our 10-Year Staff, Randy



After ten years of working at VOI, Randy comes to work every day with the same great disposition that he leaves with at the end of the day. What keeps bringing him back are the people at day program. Randy is greeted daily by many day program attendees as they rush to meet him with a handshake or a hug, and as Randy says "it's all worth it!" Randy has a great rapport with the people who are supported by VOI. He says that his coworkers motivate him, and he enjoys the group of people that surround him every day.

However, it goes beyond all that. Randy has come to realize that the families of those attending day program are thankful for his unending attentiveness to their family members. Knowing what he is doing makes such a difference in the lives of others keeps Randy coming back for more.

Randy started working at VOI residentially but has worked in day program for the past several years. He will tell you about one of the things that happen at VOI: community involvement! As an example, when Brett and Dean go to work at the gift shop of the Portage District General Hospital, they get to meet many people. Randy knows quite a few community members and often assists with introductions of Brett and Dean. The next thing you know, Brett and Dean are making more and more connections.

Randy is their supporter, motivator, and friend. The people Randy works with appreciate his honesty and upfront responses to their questions. However, sometimes people need a little extra nudge. Randy is always ready to do that for the people he supports. He offers the right amount of motivation while knowing when to pull back.

From the time he started at VOI up until now, Randy has seen significant growth in one of the people attending day program. When he started working with this person, she needed a lot of support, but after a few years, Randy can see the newfound confidence that exists in her. When they catch up at day program, she is friendly, talkative, and interested in knowing more about others.

Randy would like to say, "A big thank you to [VOI] for giving someone an opportunity that had absolutely zero experience when it came to supporting all these people. I had no idea what was going on and [they] gave me the chance, and I ran with it, and here we are ten years later. An opening came along and I'm very, very grateful".

At the end of the day when Randy leaves work, he knows "I did a good job, and everybody I support has had a good day".

Thank you, Randy, for your ten years of excellent service at Visions of Independence!

"Our son is keen to attend program every day. He is very fond of John & Randy. We appreciate how accessible the program is from our home."

— Family feedback

Lila: Q &A



How long have you been working in this field?

I've worked at Rainbow for six years plus an additional one year since VOI took over.

What motivates you to support people?

Working with people gives me a sense of complete unconditional love. Everywhere else I worked at I never felt appreciated but working with the people supported by VOI makes me feel needed, wanted and appreciated.

Working with Rainbow Residence, which is now Visions of Independence, how do you feel about working for the company?

The fact that we are now under VOI, which is so much bigger than Rainbow was, it gives us the opportunities to do so much more. They have more access to funding and it means more access to programming.

If you think about work, what was your highlight from the last six months?

I guess it would be working with the person in the hospital. He went in in January barely responding after his fall. He was hardly able to move his arms and legs at all and he went to being able to push himself up in his chair. I think that was actually a huge accomplishment for him to share with me.

What are you most proud of when you think of your work day, work life?

To give opportunities for the people we support to be a part of our community. They are just as much a part of the community with involvement and are more and more included every day.

That's great Lila. Is there anything else you want to share with me?

It's a wonderful field to work in. I know I've been told by lots of people that it takes special people to work with the people we support but it is just a little bit of compassion and understanding.

Years of Service Awards

5

Olaiya Joseph Fashakin	Juan Byron Yadao	Cherry Ann Velena
Carla Castro	Margaret Agama	Amina Abba
Rajinder Kakkar	Ralph Williams	Esther Oyoo
Adaobi Deborah Nwankwo	Shelagh Saye	Nosa Guobadia
Candace Roulette	Alita Lumgair	Angeline Lilley
Shamsul Noor	Jennibeth Briones Tuliao	Jemilizbeth Esteron
	Grayson Dawson	

10

Jenna Sapinski Leona Legary Susan Harris Randy Addison

"The staff I work with are the best, everyone helps everyone. I also enjoy seeing the smiles on each individual's face when they get to do something they love; it makes it all worth-while!"

"I like my hours and I truly enjoy the people I support."

"I enjoy my job because it is challenging and keeps me on the move and not static. I enjoy the level of support also given from the management level."

"I like helping people, and I enjoy finding solutions to problems in a creative and compassionate way."

— Staff feedback

We would also like to acknowledge the following staff members who have contributed numerous years to community living:

5+

Karen Lanip	Corrie Hector	Shelagh Saye
Erlie Figueroa	Lila McFadyen-Dooley	
Tammy McClain	Karen McGill	
Christine Funk	Joyce Prenevost	
Stacey Peirson		

10+

Cyndie Schram
Irene Stevenson

15+

Connie Major

20+

Betty Manning

Thank you!!

"How staff steps up with my child no matter how much help he may need even medical, their concerns for him require a lot of love and understanding. They take time to help out and make sure his [safety] comes first. Way to go to all staff! Thank you."

— Family feedback

What We Heard from Staff

OUR STRENGTHS

83% are satisfied with VOI's policy and procedures

80% are satisfied with the programming provided to people we support

84% are satisfied with the support provided to people we support

70% are satisfied with the quality of in-house training received

80% overall job satisfaction experience by staff

77% are satisfied with VOI's promotion of work/life balance

*When asked about what they like most about working at VOI,
55% answered 'the people we support'*

WHERE WE NEED TO IMPROVE

30% would like to see more training opportunities

11% would like to receive more support from their facility manager

10% would like to receive more opportunities to enhance personal wellness

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

17% suggest improving wages

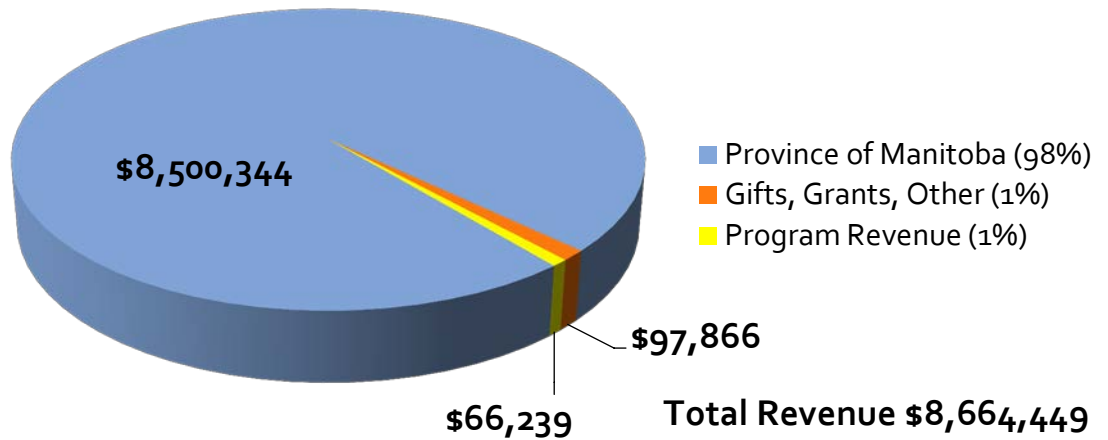
5% suggest improving scheduling

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

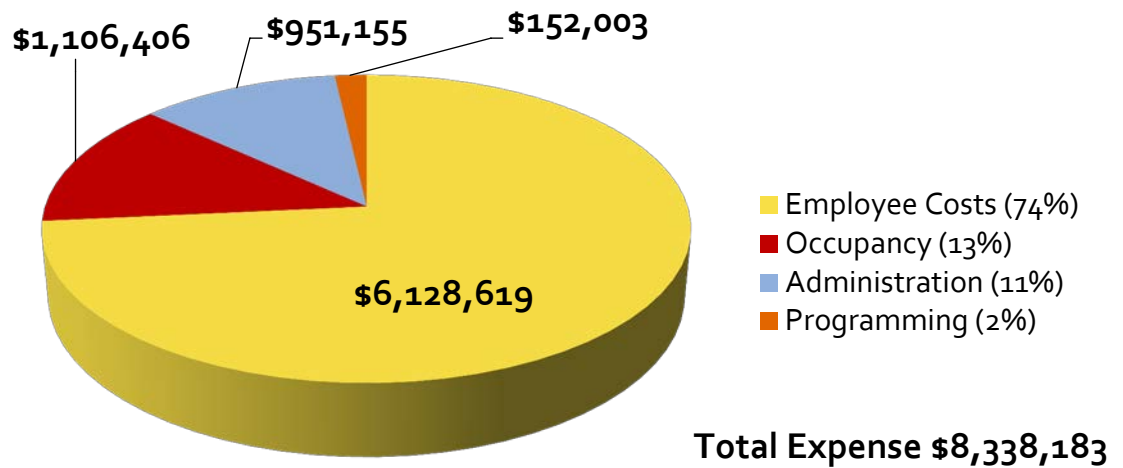
Provide focussed training and support to managers and staff

Financials

REVENUE



EXPENSES



**Please see Financial Report for details.*



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